

# DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN



# **BERSERKER**

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## **BOOKS**

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THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN





OTTO BRAUN  
AT 16 YEARS.

# THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

WITH SELECTIONS FROM HIS  
LETTERS AND POEMS

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## INTRODUCTION

It is probable that the reader has never heard of *Otto Braun: Aus nachgelassenen Schriften eines Frühvollendeten*, published at Berlin 1920-1921. That was my case until in August of that year, spending a few charming days in the peaceful retreat of a friend's villa at St. Cloud, I took up the *Nouvelle Revue Française*—always so sensitively alert—and read a long and sympathetic review of this book, which I thereupon obtained. Ever since then I have been vainly looking for some sign of awareness of Otto Braun in our own dear foggy remote land.\* Yet he is better worth hearing of, so far as one can tell, than most of the brilliant or amiable youths, slain in the war, whose friends have piously collected their literary remains. These youths, one too often feels, had they had the good or the bad fortune to live longer, would have died in their beds in the odour of mediocrity. Otto Braun, one is confident—and in that confidence is his fine distinction—was born to be great, though he died before he had written a single line for publication.

\* It should be mentioned that this Introduction was published, in substance, as a review in the *Nation* and *Athenæum*, 28th February, 1922. I then learnt that the question of the book's translation had already been discussed.

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He was well born. Both his parents were of high intellectual and personal quality, while his kinships were remarkable. His father is Dr. Heinrich Braun, by birth an Austrian, long honourably known as a politico-economic publicist on the Socialist side, and editor of the *Annalen für Soziale Politik und Gesetzgebung*; his sister had married Victor Adler, the Austrian Social-Democratic leader, whose son, Fritz Adler, shot the reactionary Stürgh in 1916. Otto's mother, Lily Braun, a brilliant, sympathetic, and highly-endowed woman, had a European reputation as a leader in Socialism and feminism. She was the daughter of a Prussian general of noble family, and it was only by a daring and difficult rupture that she broke away from the family traditions. But there was more than Prussian blood in her veins. Her grandmother was the natural daughter of King Jerome, brother of the great Napoleon, by a little Alsatian countess of his Westphalian Court, an attractive and delightful woman, who had been privileged to spend part of her youth near Goethe at Weimar. King Jerome, though often calumniated, was a highly remarkable man, of acute mind, fine taste, noble bearing and charming personality.

In her *Memoiren einer Sozialistin*, an autobiographical "novel," which she published in 1909 and dedicated to her son, Lily Braun tells of her boy, in an engagingly naïve maternal way, even before he was born. "I became to myself a sacred thing," she writes. "I cherished my body as the believer

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cherishes the shrine that conceals the Holy of Holies, warding off every low or evil thought, so that no poison might enter. I desired a son, one who might be a leader or a pioneer," though the fulfilment of such a wish, she thought to herself as she fashioned the baby-clothes, seemed beyond the possibilities of happiness. Yet we do not yet know enough to be assured that such maternal consecration is always fruitless.\*

Otto's parents, we are not surprised to find, were his most trusted and intimate friends—though he had to pass through that struggle with the ideals of the immediately preceding generation which no youth who is really alive can ever escape—and when his mother died she commended him, as to a sort of foster-mother, to the friend who, with Dr. Braun's co-operation, has edited this volume, and with admirable discretion. When the war broke out he entered the army, being barely seventeen years of age, and fought on the Eastern Front until he was wounded in 1916. His wound was scarcely healed before he was back again, this time in France,

\* A biography of Lily Braun by her friend Julie Vogelstein (now married to Dr. Braun) is published in the first volume of her collected works (*Lily Braun: Gesammelte Werke*, five volumes: Hermann Klemm, Berlin, 1923). An attractive picture is here presented of her fine and impetuous nature; "Lily's life was a perpetual battle with herself, with the world, with God"; her enthusiasms often met with disillusion, but she was always widening and deepening her conceptions of life.

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and his life was ended in April, 1916, at Marcell-cave, before he had completed his twenty-first year.

This child, this youth, is clearly the boy revealed in these diaries and letters. Unique as he is, the words "brilliant," "precocious," "prodigy," do not spring to one's lips. We seem to see here, not a mere natural caprice, a miracle of youthful facility, such as Cowley was, but the natural and normal child of some titanic race the world has never known. But, one stops to reflect, had the world never known that Titan race? There is no need to play with fancies here. Otto Braun was, in real fact, born of a Titan race, though he never seems to have attached any significance to the fact, and, while we must not overlook the finely keen and critical intelligence sometimes associated with a Jewish origin, we may perhaps also find a clue to this youth's quality when we remember that in him were handed on the elements that had gone to the making of Napoleon. He was akin in blood to that Titan who, whatever one may think of his use of power, had said about it: "It is as an artist that I love power. I love it as a violinist loves his violin, to draw out of it sounds and chords and harmonics." Unlike Nietzsche, and in a more reasonable spirit, Otto Braun never spoke with contempt of his German fatherland, and regarded himself indeed as altogether German, but his intellectual temperament is really less Teutonic than Nietzsche's. Even his instinctive style is Latin

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in its precision of form and its clear contrasts, rather than German, and this style faithfully reflects the caste of his mind, which has more in it of the ancestral Florence than the native Berlin. One can well understand how happily he revelled in that city and neighbouring Fiesole.

"You seem to assume that we are 'wonder-children,'" he wrote at the age of thirteen to a boy friend. "It is far from being so. 'Wonder-children' are creatures unnaturally forced in a hot-house, blossoming quickly, and more quickly fading, soon to be forgotten, for the most part with justice. Certainly, I would rather have, like Alexander, a short life, great and deep, full of struggle and honour, full of uses for mankind, than a long and insignificant one. Only obey your daimon!" (That "daimon," another form of Napoleon's Fate, is constantly reappearing in the Diary.) Elsewhere he remarks that "youthfulness" is not a matter of years, that the old may be young, and that the hearts of the young are sometimes very old. It would not be correct to say that young Otto possessed the wisdom of age. We might rather say of him, as Rahel said of Wilhelm von Humboldt throughout his life, that "he was of no age." Otto possessed the direct vision, the unfailing insight, that few indeed of us will ever acquire with age, for it is inborn; we can only call it, vaguely, genius. Of mental exhibitionism, common in clever children and encouraged by foolish parents, there is no trace. One divines

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that the young Otto was treated respectfully, as a person—even when his ideals diverged from those of his parents—but quite simply, so far as possible sensibly left alone.

While the best educational advantages were laid open to him, it is natural that the letters of this child of vast and devouring mind, yet so fastidious over what he devoured, should be full of the books he wants. The range of his interests is immense ; one scarcely knows whether to wonder most at the diversity of the directions in which his sensitive spirit was feeling out, or the stability of the organising mind at the centre. He adores his mother ; he would like to build golden palaces for her and lay the world beneath her feet ; it is a joy to read the books she writes ; yet he tells her, sweetly but plainly, where, and why, he thinks her judgment is wrong. It is of himself that he is ever the most ruthless critic, for without a stern directing criticism receptivity is mere waste and confusion. He always holds clearly before himself the two-fold function of studying and creating, and his impulse in both directions is equally strong. It was inevitable that he should be concerned with the problem of religion. He was averse from mysticism, notwithstanding his reliance on inner guidance ; an exclusive pre-occupation of the one will the All seemed to him to carry Individualism to an unwholesome extreme. A religion, he held, must always be also an ethic. At the age of eleven he formulated a creed which was

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fairly on the lines of his later thought, for it was to harmonise the needs of spirit and body, to avoid alike the over-simplicity of the specialist and the over-complexity of the *dilettante*; it included twenty articles, among which are found: "Thou shouldst have great passions, and thou shouldst know how to fight them"; "Thou shalt leave nothing unrevealed, thou shalt illuminate everything, thou shalt investigate everything, save only art and beauty, for these shalt thou enjoy." "Thou shalt be a Titan!" Three years later he says in his Diary that the civilisation of the future must be in large part Hellenic: "Naturally, I do not mean that it will be as if a clever cook mixed together the Greek and the Modern, Socialism and Nietzsche, for an appetising ragout, but that one will come who, unconsciously, will carry in his spirit something that is congruent to the Greek." He was opposed to asceticism, but it was on self-discipline, self-control, that he more often insists, as a training for the hard task of life, for he looked on life, it has been said, as a sculptor looks on marble.

It will be seen that Otto Braun's mental constitution was of the classic rather than the romantic type, though he was too good a German to be contemptuous of the romantic spirit, for which, he says, he felt a kind of "piety." In this classical attitude he certainly represented the general tendency of our century, clearly and even excessively manifested also in France. It is interesting that the renaissance



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of the classic spirit should be accompanied by a certain displacement of Greece from the older position of exclusive eminence, though this we do not, and should not, expect to discern in Otto Braun. To-day the culture of Greece has not only been transformed by an additional extension backwards over another two thousand years, but even then it appears as but one of many ancient cultures, in some respects the nearest to us, yet still one among many, and not, regarded as a whole, either the most harmonious in itself or the closest to our modern ideals, even, as the historian of art, Élie Faure, has put it, a "monstrosity." Yet the very fact that Greek classicism is no longer for us an idol to be worshipped blindly may well be of help in the Renaissance of the classic spirit and save us from the perils of pseudo-classicism.

This development had proceeded harmoniously and regularly until the age of twelve. Then we become aware of disturbances which may be the sign of pubertal expansion below the surface. His letters become restless, discontented, and unhappy. The routine of school irks him ; it leaves him no time, he feels, for his real life and for real study ; he makes a frustrated attempt to run away ; his parents arrive and bring him home. They have at hand the best advice. It is seen that the boy has outgrown schools ; they could have no further influence on him that was not bad. He is brought in touch with Professor Petzoldt, and his great

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educational experience (which has been especially with highly gifted students) enables him to comprehend ; he is willing to devote a part of his own time to the private direction of the boy's studies, if he can obtain a partial remission of his official work. He sends in an application to the Prussian Minister of Education, with a carefully detailed memorandum. Little Otto's endowments, he here states, are "astonishing and wonderful" ; in more than twenty years' experience he had never met with a single scholar, boy or girl, who could even be approximately compared with him. In his well-grounded knowledge of the whole range of German language and literature alone the boy's knowledge would do honour to a candidate for the doctorate, and that was only one of the subjects he had mastered. Moreover, outside scholarship, he was actively interested in art and music and Nature and natural sciences. All this is not the outcome of a "hungry memory," the boy is not a "mere reflecting mirror" ; he knows how to guard himself courageously against the flood of his interests ; he possesses a powerfully creative spirit which is able to mould and assimilate all that he accepts. This child, Petzoldt concluded, is from birth a poet and thinker whose future it is impossible to foretell ; he possesses an outstanding philosophic predisposition which no existing school could cope with. The application was duly sent in, and after a proper bureaucratic delay of over three months the proper bureaucratic reply duly arrived,

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a brief emphatic refusal. It is not only in England, even in well-organised Prussia bureaucrats were like that! But other ways out were found. After a short period at a Berlin gymnasium, he was placed under the care of tutors at home. His development once again proceeded harmoniously, in the large garden, in the country, now and then abroad.

A little later, when he was about fourteen, we have the evidence of Dr. Oscar Levy who talked with "this child of sunny Athens," as he calls him, at his parents' house one day. The boy, he says, "seemed to be overjoyed at this opportunity of learning about the state of English affairs from a visitor who had just crossed the Channel. I was immensely struck with the handsome boy's intimate knowledge, not only of the daily and historical events, but likewise of the theoretical and profounder aspects of English politics. And with all that there was no atom of conceit in this youth, who was young in years, but very mature in mind and judgment. It was certainly the first time in my life," he adds, "that I had been impressed by the mind of a mere youth." \*

Otto's teacher in mathematics, Dr. Kaempf, recording the youthful naturalness and joyousness of his beautifully developing personality, remarks that he was "such as one might well suppose the boy Goethe to have been." To the reader of this

\* *Nation and Athenaeum*, 11th March, 1922.

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book it is in some ways less Goethe than Otto Braun recalls than Wilhelm von Humboldt, who now looms ever larger in the distance as the fame of his brother Alexander contracts. Otto Braun was indeed a more finely adjusted organism, more of an artist, than that vast unwieldy spirit, and he was happier than Humboldt, whose early environment was unfavourable, in the congenial conditions provided for his growth, but it was on the lines and in the spirit of Humboldt's work rather than of Goethe's that, it seems to me, Otto Braun was developing. There was a genuine and spontaneous little spring of poetry within him, but one scarcely feels that it was strong or deep. He was a marvellously sure critic, eagerly placing a sensitive hand on to everything that he came near, yet a keen and ruthless hand, that instinctively sorted out all it touched. But it was towards the social and political field, in the sphere of the State, that Otto Braun was slowly being drawn, and there, it seems likely, that he would have found his special work.

Otto liked to work and think in the open air. His verse is full of the open air, peopled by classic symbols of Nature like Helios and Artemis and Demeter. Aphrodite sometimes emerges, but only slightly, in faint human figures, for, as he says in one of these poems, he has yet, at the age of sixteen, only been touched by Eros in flight, and it is to Apollo that he most often turns in reverence. Later, during the war, and after his mother's death, there

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is a deeper note, but at this time a delicate music and perfume float over his lines, and though they have reference to modern and personal things, we seem to see the influence, which we know at this time he felt, of the Latin elegiac poets, especially Tibullus. In one of the most personal of the poems, he expresses his love of trees, "companions of my dreams," and prays the gods—for he called himself a polytheist—that he may grow like a tree, like an oak, or at least like a flower, beneath rain and sun and wind, to scatter ripe seeds in the furrows.

The process of self-development still continued, in accordance with the motto he set out at the head of a new volume of his Diary in 1912: "I believe in my daimon; I believe in my duties; I believe in my work." There is perhaps now less about books, though still when he first meets one of the great masterpieces there is ever a fresh rapture which never dims the increasingly sure critical judgment. There is more of art, and especially architecture, of his travels, of Nature, of flowers, of his ecstasy when lying naked in the sunshine amid the vines of Fiesole, and more, also, of politico-economic reflection, for he had projected a large work on the State which he was thinking of even to the end.

When the war broke out Otto Braun spontaneously hastened to join the Army. Naturally enough he had given little thought to military matters, nor would it here be easy to find (if one were foolish

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enough to search) any of the petty patriotism that pleases the petty minds of all lands. From the first he had seen the wide horizon of the world, and he shows remarkably little interest in national distinctions. He observes somewhere that all great spirits rise above national frontiers, though, he is careful to add, they must be rooted in national soils. He believes in Germany, not because he imagines it is superior to other countries, but because it is youthful, and a youthful people can never be crushed; in one of the finest and gravest pages of the Diary he prays that Germany may emerge "prouder and more modest." But he had no blind faith in victory. It so happens that some years before the war he had taken the trouble to work out the statistics of the economic position of Germany and Austria in case of war (he assumes that Italy would fall away) and he notes, with uncanny prevision, how disastrous it would be.

Of his work during the war he was reticent, alike in letters and the Diary, though it is clear that the rough manners of the Prussian army were not congenial to him; it was only his iron will that enabled him to overcome the hardships of a training for which he had not the years or the physique, and his first immediate superiors bore him ill-will on account of his parents' political opinions; his position, indeed, in the Jäger regiment he had joined became intolerable, and he secured transference to an infantry regiment. What is known, beyond the

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fact that he was officially commended, has mainly been gleaned from comrades, and attention may here be drawn to the records they have contributed to the Appendix. It seems characteristic that while, as we might expect, the youth's extraordinary quickness in absorbing instruction is noted, as well as his calmness and courage in emergencies, it is his conduct in the trenches that chiefly attracted attention. He insisted on sharing all the hardships of his men, he was skilful in handling his superiors as well as his inferiors, he knew how to animate and cheer others in the most difficult and trying tasks; even his familiarity with the *Iliad* here came usefully to hand. One may have thought that the youthful Otto had been too strenuous with his ideals of duty; there was no trace of the prig, yet it was possible to ask oneself whether a youth whose destinies seemed so high might not perhaps have displayed a wilder turbulence of the impulses at the outset than we here seem to witness. But Otto Braun was justified of his self-discipline, and at the one point of acute contact with life that was to be vouchsafed to him—if one may be forgiven for gracing war with the name of "life"—he proved completely adequate. The chances and changes of this mortal life must always remain unaccountable, but there is nothing here to blur the intimation that a youth fell at Marcellave who might well have become a guiding spirit of the twentieth century.

The music of *Adonais* seems to sing in the brain

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as we approach the end of this beautiful book. The final note of that music, and therein lies the truth of its inspiration, is the note of exhilaration. The spirit of Nature, as we know, is exuberance and extravagance, an infinite expenditure and an infinite waste. The spirit of man differs from that of Nature, so far indeed as it can differ, chiefly in that for him nothing is lost. It is the unfulfilled things that for man are the least wasted. It is they that are enshrined most sacredly in his heart, to inspire a fruition they themselves might never have reached. Even Chatterton, that distraught and perverse youth who achieved nothing, still remains a beautiful cloud, floating over our human dream; Marlowe and Keats shine in our sky with a radiance that beckons us onward more compellingly than any poet who fulfilled himself to the utmost and died in abject senility at last. Otto Braun was a marvellous flower that never ripened into fruit. He is nothing in the world but the penetrating fragrance in our air of a pollen that can never die because it has never attained to what we call life. Yet it may well be the potent seed to fertilise souls that are still unborn.

HAVELOCK ELLIS.





## INTRODUCTION TO THE GERMAN EDITION

" Woe and alas, that so soon the glorious being  
should vanish,  
Vanish from earth that still swarms with the  
dull and the base ! "

GOETHE'S *Achilleis*

OTTO BRAUN was killed in the spring of 1918, before his twenty-first birthday. A selection of his poems, extracts from his diaries and letters is made in this book.\*

\* Besides historical, philosophical, political and military writings of greater or lesser magnitude—complete and incomplete, or merely outlined—there were found among his papers a fragment of a novel, a great number of poems, and twenty-six diaries with regular entries from his seventh year until two days before his death. From these, and from over a thousand letters which we had at our disposal, his father and I made the following selection. The mass of material, and the necessity for keeping the book within reasonable bounds, severely restricted our choice.

None of the entries were intended for publication ; Otto Braun was very indignant when one of his poems was printed in a periodical while he was at the front. If the poems are to be regarded as written under an inner necessity without a thought of publication, how much more so is this the case with his diaries. " In order to account to myself, so as to be absolutely honest with

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The jottings and writings of a child and an immature boy can hardly present more than a dim, faint picture, which needs the love of the observer or personal reminiscence in order to infuse light and colour into it. The fuller the bud, the more fragrant the half-opened blossom, the paler and more lifeless must appear their image. How can dead flowers give a sense of spring? And how can growing life be conveyed by the words of a boy? Among the relatives and intimate friends of his immediate circle the impression of his living self may persist, and any very small thing may be sufficient to recall it; but for the stranger everything that is not visible in his writings and his life must remain vague and shadowy.

Many promises remain unfulfilled. Germany is on the verge of despair. Everywhere is confusion and doubt. In the midst of our own distress and desolation what can the wistful picture of a broken blossom be to us? We must think of the present, we have no time to mourn and lament.

No, were Otto Braun no more than a hope and a promise, only a great future denied fulfilment, we would weep for him in the silence of our hearts and nothing would move us to betray the sacred secret of our sorrow. But he stands before us as a marked character, fixed in stature and form, free and complete myself," thus he once described his need for this form of confession. Though they are not in literary shape, we have faithfully reproduced all the MSS., and have only corrected obvious slips of the pen.

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in himself, and calls to us imperiously to draw the curtain which veils him from the world, to enable all to share in that which was revealed to but a few.

The jottings take us from his seventh to his twenty-first years, from childhood to a manhood tried by war and suffering. The rapidity of his development may well astonish us, but more wonderful still is the sense of the continuity of his character running through his intellectual growth and development, the unity of the mind remaining unbroken even when growth was most rapid and quite clearly apparent when the boy was yet a child. To the end his was a childlike nature, yet even while playing with tin soldiers, he was as serious as an adult. Quite early he thinks he is born to greatness, and this gives the little boy a feeling of responsibility and of great determination. He does not know what his task will be, but he knows how to prepare himself for it. He regards his talents and capacities as imposing duties. None of them lead him astray, rather do they point the way onward. A task easily achieved spurs him on to aim at something higher and more difficult. Pure and humble he holds himself in readiness for his call.

Was he pious then? A saint? Yes, provided the word means a warrior, a fighter for the life of this earth which he loves as the sculptor loves his marble. Work is his joy. Courageously he looks out into the world. Of meek forbearance he knows nothing. His belief in retribution is unyielding; he regards it

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as an unalterable law that even innocent transgressions demand atonement, he realises the force of it even in bitter agony, showing no pity for himself or others.

Well endowed by nature, and provided with the best education, passionately alive to every experience, like a poet lost in visions and dreams, happily absorbed in all that was ever great or beautiful, he gazes with calm serenity upon all that presents itself to him. Hostile worlds are united in him ; revolutionary ideas with a respect for tradition, fervent enthusiasm with calm impartiality, passionate ardour and steadiness, flashing intuition and laborious toil. His one great objective, to which he wants to devote all his powers, is the State. The State to him comprises everything, reflects in itself the whole life of the people. His creative instinct is stirred from childhood on to take part in the shaping of the State. And zealously he forges his weapons for that task. He seeks to determine its origin and nature. Whether he is investigating the structure and theories underlying different forms of the State, the philosophical systems of Greek thinkers, the fate of Italy, or whether he is absorbing the songs and plays of early German literature and the poems of Greece, always he tries to obtain his knowledge from original sources and spares no effort to reach them. The more burning his desire for activity becomes as the years roll on, the more devotedly does he further his book on the State<sup>1</sup> by studies in the history of

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religion and art, in economics and law, in administration and constitutional law. Up to his last months he is still full of his plan to work it out in several volumes.<sup>1</sup> He draws up a very detailed scheme.

And at the same time he sees Aphrodite's robe floating in the morning air and pours out fervent songs and prayers to the gods. He called himself a polytheist. For him everything had its own specific essence; he saw in all things not merely a spark of divinity but the very form of God, embodied in Nature and Fate, in Reality and Imagination.

Many rejoiced in his sunny nature and exuberant vigour. And yet he kept himself to himself. To two people only did he bare his innermost heart—to his father and mother. To these he showed the very depths of his soul, and was neither ashamed nor shy. When his mother died and in her last will asked her friend to be his foster-mother, he gave me his complete confidence. Shortly before his death he stated how much his feeling of absolute unity with his parents meant and would always mean to him, in spite of his *mental* independence.

He was much concerned with his "conversion," with the influence which his contact with the Greek spirit had upon him, his movement away from the baroque to the classical, from the titanic to a belief in the divine. The cause of this change is related in his diaries. But he only realised its true significance during his last summer; his exuberance

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clamoured for crystallisation. Once he thought that anything that was well formed and complete in itself, lacked animation and struggle ; he rejected the classical masters with the classicist works when their hollowness had been brought home to him. It was not in artistic form that he first learnt to know and understand the nobility of beauty born of conflict. It was from his own excess of energy that there arose his desire for self-control, the longing to unite opposing forces—in a word, the classical ideal.

And this boy, full of the joy of creative, active work, wrote in his diary that last Christmas—as he had once written as a thirteen-year-old child : “ The value of a man lies neither in his words nor in his deeds, but in that which he really and truly is.” And his confession of faith ends with the words : “ Perfect fulfilment of personality is only attainable through one thing—perfect and divine love.” Does it not recall to us Hölderlin’s promise :

“ He who so loved must pass, and go  
The long road leading to the Gods.”

J. V.

## **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**





## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

OTTO BRAUN, the son of Dr. Heinrich Braun and Lily Braun, was born in Berlin, on 27th June, 1897. How he was awaited and welcomed, appears in the *Hymn to the Golden Autumn*, contained in his mother's Memoirs.<sup>3</sup> His childhood and early schooldays were spent in Berlin, and in 1907 he went to the *Freie Schulgemeinde* (self-governing school community) of Wickersdorf, where he remained for over a year. Upon his return he attended a Berlin *Gymnasium*, but for a short time only. The impression which his gifts made on educationists, even at this early period, is shown by the letter to the Ministry of Education, reproduced in the Appendix.<sup>4</sup>

His further education was entrusted to private tutors.<sup>5</sup> He grew up in the freedom and simplicity of his father's house and garden. His development was assisted by travel, and by a stay in a quiet mountain village nearly every summer.

At the outbreak of war, being then barely seventeen years of age, he volunteered, and joined the Army in September, 1914. He took part in all his company's engagements on the Eastern front, till he was wounded in November, 1916. He was prevented from taking part in active service for some time, by a wound which paralysed his arm for months, and he worked for nearly a year in the

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Military Section of the Foreign Office. But hardly had his wounds healed when he felt compelled to go once more to the defence of his country. He was killed by a shell on 28th April, 1918, at Marcelcave, in the north-east of France. The chasseurs of his company buried him in the military cemetery at Chuignolles. After the war his remains were laid at rest beside those of his mother, under the ancient oaks in his father's garden.

## **PART I**

**EXTRACTS FROM DIARIES AND LETTERS WRITTEN  
BETWEEN THE AGES OF NINE AND THIRTEEN**



## FOREWORD TO PART I

THE first part of the road takes us from the ninth\* year of the boy's life to the great change which took place when he was barely fourteen. The manifestations of his personality, even as a child, will not escape the careful reader of these pages. Childlike and artless as they are, spontaneously jotted down and often excessive in their enthusiasm, they are the genuine expression of his natural self and must be accepted as such. Then only will Otto Braun be seen in his true light. In delighted amazement we follow the way in which the boy moulds and fashions himself. All the living forces of his nature act in harmony, while an indefatigable instinct for work, for construction, brings them all into the service of self-discipline and the formation of his character. At an early age he experiences the need for solitude essential to all poetic temperaments; at an early age he tastes the bliss of silent meditation. And in all the turmoil of his years of childhood he gains from his own painful experience the knowledge of sorrow's blessing.



## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

### DIARY

18th January, 1907.—. . . We acted *Horny Siegfried*. Everything went very well and both of them (playfellows) went away happy. I have got about seventeen stage-wings, they were all lying on the ground in gay confusion. Anna ordered me, just as if I were her slave, to "pack everything away neatly, each in its box, for to-morrow I have to clean. What isn't put away I shall sweep up!" That made me feel for the first time that there are ways and ways of giving orders, and ways and ways of obeying them. I had up till now held the point of view of Fortunatus; I had always wanted to achieve big things, but in the way he did. Now I feel that I am not made to follow. I am made to lead. I feel that I shall one day be something great. But proud I never will be, the gods forbid! Dreams particularly make me realise this.

### TO HIS MOTHER

Wickersdorf, 6th February, 1908.—Oh, I cannot tell you how overjoyed I am, how inexpressibly, tremendously happy! It's an indescribable feeling. And why? Because for the first time I feel the blood of my ancestors seething and bubbling in my veins, while I clench my fist to bring it whistling down, on the instant, on my enemy's neck. Isn't that an exhilarating feeling? Let me tell you all about it: W . . ., that hound, that devil, that



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twenty-fold Voltaire in *character*, that embodiment of all intrigue, has been telling us the very worst stories about P. and A., has been lying to us. . . .

### TO HIS MOTHER

*Wickersdorf, 8th March, 1908.*—Yesterday, to my unspeakable joy, I reckoned that by Easter I shall have finished the history of Classic Philosophy. The money I got for the stamps will enable me to buy the history of Mediæval or Patristic Philosophy. Then I shall still have about four marks, with which I shall buy Reclams and Leibniz biscuits and the Romantic writers. I'll order them soon, as they always take so long to come. For Easter I should like: *Chinese Poems*; Hölderlin's *Hyperion*; Müllner, *The Twenty-ninth of February*; Werner, *The Twenty-fourth of February*; Aristotle, *Poetics*; Aristotle, *The Constitution of Athens*; Theocritus, *Poems*; Hafiz, *Persian Poems*. . . .

### TO HIS MOTHER

*Wickersdorf (Spring, 1908).*—I shall tell you now what I want for my birthday in case I forget later on. Most of all I want—money. You'll get a fright when you hear that, but it's true. For I want to buy myself some beautiful books, but they are expensive. Please write me how much money I have at home. In return (even if you don't send me the money I have still so much to be grateful

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

for), I shall send you for your next birthday the Cotta edition of *Goethe*. Oh, mother, you can't think how irritating it is to remain here all this time doing nothing. No, doing nothing is not the right word, for I am working very hard just now outside school, especially writing poetry, essays and sketches—always in the far-off hope that one day I shall be able to earn my own living; how I always envy the poor factory children who are earning theirs already! But the time has not yet come for me to start life, to take the great step from youth to manhood. The great difference between a youth and a man is that the man has to go through all the struggle while the youth enjoys its fruits. . . . Oh, if only I could take part in the battle, if only I could make my living! I should build you golden palaces in gratitude to you for bearing me and bringing me up; I should lay the world at your feet for you to rule, and for you to mould according to your will and God's. Work is my delight, my seventh heaven. The *Goethe* is not such a wonderful present, as the money for it was only saved, not earned. But one beautiful thing there is about it, love, and also the joyous anticipation of a time when I shall be able to make you a present like that from money I have *earned*. Therefore, please don't send me the table and chairs, for the least I can do, if I can't work, is to deny myself something. I should like to write you a long and loving letter like this one every day. It is not that I haven't enough to say! I think to-day I have taken

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a step upward in the path of life, and have reached the point where one learns to love purely and truly.

### TO HIS MOTHER

*Wickersdorf (Spring, 1908).*—Many thanks for your letter, your cards and, above all, your book.' It is beautiful. I have enjoyed it and always will enjoy it as long as I live. It is the loveliest present you could have given me. I have almost finished it, for I read it every minute, in every free hour, in fact, in all my spare time. But I can't read it in my room, I can only read it out of doors in God's open air, which makes a poet of every one whose senses are not quite dulled, and where alone lies the image of all good and beautiful things; there and there alone can I read it. No one but you could have written this book behind the stone walls of a stinking, smoky city. We are only able to read and understand it out in the open, yet you, you could write it within city walls! But there is one thing I do not like. Why did you select the most repellent picture of Jerome in existence? The picture belies all your accounts of him, even those of the gay little operetta. A stern, awe-inspiring countenance, the nose and eyes standing out in strong contrast to the ugly, negroid mouth, the close-cut hair, parted, the general's uniform, almost too small for him, buttoned tightly to the neck; if that is your Jerome, and the Jerome of the gay little operetta, then one of you, either the painter or you, is very much in the wrong.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Wickersdorf (Spring).*— . . . Fairly late on a stormy evening, I went to stand by my window, and composed poetry, and wrote. And the lightning flashed, the thunder rolled, and the rain came down in torrents, and it was wonderful. I am looking forward tremendously to the mountains, all my thoughts run thither, where are united majesty, sublime beauty, solitude and rustic peace.

### DIARY

*Obergrainau (Bavarian Alps), 1st July, 1908.*—We went to the Höllentalklamm to-day, which impressed me more than anything ever has before. The huge rocks, the frothing torrent, at times maddened by the imprisoning walls of the gorge, then in great agitation shooting up tremendous spurts of foam, then again, as the ravine widens, flowing more quickly, or leaping petulantly, like a young foal, over boulders that seek to stem its tide. . . .

### DIARY

*20th July, 1908.*—We left in the stage-coach at nine o'clock in the morning and drove by way of Nassereit and Fernstein to the Fernpass. Fernstein consists of a pretty little castle, a charming inn, and a lake, beautifully framed by the surrounding forest ; in the lake there is an island with a great old ruin, the

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Siegmundsburg. Lonely and desolate it stands, and few wanderers find their way to it. It can be reached only in an old boat, and you have to cut your way to the top through thick undergrowth.

Then we drove by coach to Obergrainau. My heart was beating with joy when we arrived ; I had been longing for it the whole way. We passed many beautiful spots, places that really belong to the most beautiful in the Tyrol, but I love Obergrainau too much to have stayed in any one of them.

### DIARY

22nd July, 1908.—Fine weather. I almost finished setting up a great parade of all my soldiers. In the afternoon we went to the Badersee, where we read *Tristan and Isolde*. I liked it very much. True, the beautiful tale of Rivalin and Blanche fleur is just a little too sugary, but, like a Giotto, it forms a golden background for the sombre picture.

### DIARY

6th August, 1908.—This morning we went to Garmisch to fetch Frau K. and O. Then we drove back in the carriage. I showed O. all my things straight away and we were very happy. But the real holiday mood was gone. No more walks to the Badersee, no more pleasant talks, no more tranquil evenings bathed in the *Alpenglühchen* (Alpine glow), by which we used so peacefully to wander along the

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

road to the Eibsee. A new and different mood had taken possession of me. But I didn't like it half as much as the earlier one. Sad, and yet happy, I went to bed. It was the first day on which I lost more than I gained.

### DIARY

*7th August, 1908.*—We went with both of them to the Höllentalklamm. But I couldn't enjoy it as much as the first time, I felt again that my holidays were over. In the evening we left Obergrainau, and everything that I love and hold dear.

### DIARY

*9th August, 1908.*—To-day was the fateful day on which I had to say good-bye to mother, to Bavaria, to the mountains, the day on which I had to return to Wickersdorf. I shed but few tears at parting, for when I am really in trouble I suffer in silence and do not show it to the world. In the train I read Selma Lagerlöf's *Antichrist*.

### TO HIS MOTHER

*Wickersdorf, 10th August, 1908.*—I only received three book-shelves and so I left more than half the books in the box. I am rather sad,—well, I might say, very sad. But I was calm, spoke little, read a great deal, and controlled myself. It is when I suffer most that I exercise most self-control. When

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I let myself go, it is usually a sign that it is only a little sorrow, for which I do not feel 'it necessary to exercise self-restraint, and which I like to show off. In fifty days we shall see each other again.

The railway journey was very pleasant. I read the *Antichrist*, which impressed me tremendously. I suppose you are working a great deal just now? I hope you're not too sad. I have submitted to the inevitable.

“Never give way, prove strength and *stay*,  
Summon the arms of the Gods to protect.”

Please give my love to my dear, dear mountains and the Badersee.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Wickersdorf, 80th August, 1908.*— . . . I have awfully little time for my own work. In any case I don't feel very well, either in body or in mind, but I do not want to upset you.

But four weeks more and liberty will laugh  
Into mine eyes and I can work and make  
My thoughts and wishes real! Creative work,  
Oh joy! And love will be around me, too,  
What are the other good things of the world  
Lacking the crown of love and liberty?  
Few, few indeed are those I understand  
With all my heart: I thought, once, they were many  
And understood me, too,  
But slowly now, I overcame that folly,  
Grew free from that delusion.  
I know two people, dwelling in my heart  
In a strong castle that is all their own,  
Unconquerable and impregnable.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

Out of far distances of yore, the Great  
Shine like the stars out of the midnight Heaven.  
I love to draw myself deep down apart  
Into the secret places of my soul  
And roam in fancy's kingdom ;  
Or think and think over the Problems weird  
And mysteries of this most wondrous world.  
But for all this there's here, " No time," " No time,"  
That is the Motto, even afternoons  
Are crammed with lessons.  
So one's wee scrap of leisure is best spent  
With books. But once, in every seven years  
There's time for dreaming !  
And then the rabble breaks into one's refuge  
With howls and shouts, breaking the forest spell.  
Many tall citadels now in my heart  
Will fall, some day.

These lines are meant to tell you something and to pacify me. I haven't written another word of my novel <sup>10</sup> yet.

### TO HIS MOTHER

*Wickersdorf, 2nd September, 1908.*—It's a long time since I wrote you last. I was waiting till I was in a better mood, but it's no use. Yesterday they gave a performance of *Twelfth Night*. It was simply wonderful. I forgot everything while I was watching it, and saw only the play, which thrilled me tremendously. Every time one of the "improvements" came—and they were many, sad to say—I got very angry. They were so easily detected, too. I cannot get into the right mood ; it only comes when I get absorbed in myself or in you. But there's no time for that . . . Lately I have been attacked by a



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very extraordinary feeling, which I never had before. I don't feel at home in Wickersdorf. I swear to you on my word of honour, I swear by all that's good and beautiful, by all that's true in this world, that I haven't made this up just so as to get to Berlin. It's just there and can't be helped. Of course, at bottom it's a matter of feeling, but there is also a very good reason for it. The day before yesterday at the Foundation Ceremony W. made a speech about the Wickersdorf philosophy.

Something has changed ; either I have changed, or the others. I think it is I. I don't feel as I used to feel, I don't think as I used to think, and yet I believe I have got nearer to you. . . . A new religion is needed, we thirst for it, our natures demand it, and yet we dare not say so, we are too cowardly. What is it the world lacks ? Love ! Many people declare that they love from the bottom of their hearts. But whose love is really pure and noble ?

Father's letter and the book came just now. Isn't it funny, he talks of how I should put an ideal before myself and should develop my will power. That's just what I am anxious to do. My ideal is, to spread the truth among human beings. And I must add, that I cannot strengthen my will and my character here, that's the chief reason why :

“ To one of your receiving  
Enough is shown : a cypress, not a bosom,  
Hides my poor heart. So, let me hear you speak.”  
*Twelfth Night.*

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

*Berlin, October, 1908.*—I have been having a terribly difficult time since September 8, and even before. I am continually home-sick and depressed. I have tried to express these moods in poems.<sup>11</sup>

### DIARY

*5th October, 1908.*—Everything is alive. I am once more in the right mood. I have changed from a stay-at-home into a living being. I'm quite astounded at myself, and keep on asking myself whether I *am* alive or whether I'm really still dead to everybody; whether I am still in that prison-house, Wickersdorf, which deadened all my feelings and weighed down my whole being with an oppressive armour of reason. Now I've shaken off the last vestiges of it, it lies in fragments at my feet, and the gracious gods are approaching. I am free once more, a life-giving, creative human being. All that was dead is shaken off, all that was evil and ugly has been transmuted and spiritualised. I have passed through one stage of my development, the stage full of cobwebs and dust, of rage within, pearls without. Away with the past, let us look into the future! There, not in the past, lies happiness. A new life has begun.

### DIARY

*October, 1908.*—On our arrival in Berlin I was, mentally, in rather an unsettled state and had to fight a hard battle till I got to the point of being able

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to write the *Anti-Christendom*<sup>11</sup> and my latest poems. I'm quite certain the first great victory was on October 5. Then followed blow upon blow, it *was* a battle! . . . Wickersdorf has been of great use to me, as has the development I went through there. Now, of course, I have reached quite opposite views. But it was at Wickersdorf that I learnt to work, I had very bitter inner conflicts there (—and later too), and they have helped me most of all.

### TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

10th April, 1909.—Something is wrong with you, you are like a fish on the shore waiting for a merciful hand to throw it into the water again. I think the water you need is love. "That which thou art thou dost remain," says Goethe in *Faust*. Do what you will, love is the thing you really want and it always will be to the very last. What's wrong is that in Wickersdorf you don't get enough love . . . Just to take one example: when you were in such a temper that evening A. said to you: "You can be bad-tempered, but not here." In her place I should have called you by your name, looked into your eyes and so recalled you to your better self.

### DIARY

May, 1909.—When we arrived in Obergrainau it was cloudy, as usual, but gradually the clouds disappeared and there in all his might stood our old friend the Waxenstein. "Become ye like me and

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

outgrow all that is little," he seems to call to me. Oh, how I should love to do his bidding! This time we always went to the Badersee for dinner, it being only a quarter of an hour away, so I was able to row every day. There are such a lot of bays round the lake, some of them twice the length of the boat. I've given them all names, calling them after the things we read in them, e.g., Apostata Bay (*Cæsar and Gallea*, by Ibsen), Tristan Bay (*Tristan and Isolde*, by Gottfried von Strassburg), Hannele Bay (*Hannele's Himmelfahrt*, by Gerhart Hauptmann), etc., etc. Then, for instance, *Bay of Dreams*, *At the Sign of the Stinking Waters*, and so on. Though the lake is very small, it's one of the loveliest I know. Once, too, we drove to the Fernpass. It shelters two gorgeous lakes, the white one, beside the road, lying so beautifully calm and lonely at the foot of the Sonnenspitze, and the larger Blindsee which stretches away deep down below the road, flashing and sparkling like a glowing jewel.

The Plansee, where we drove once, is like an uncouth giant; hemmed in by the mountains he has lain down between them, and now, quite aware of his true strength, and never losing his majestic grandeur, he graciously permits little men to paddle about all over him.

## DIARY

*August, 1909.*—The tendency of my inner development lately has been from Idealism to Materialism—

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to Realism. In everything, even in art. For instance, I like the Edda better than Homer. I prefer reading the *Islandabók* to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and I am more drawn to Odin and Thor, Frigga and Freya than to Zeus and Apollo, Hera and Athene. I prize Greek art above all other, but in a sense the Germanic is essentially nearer to me for the same reason that I like Goethe better than Schiller. Schiller gets an idea and then seeks some one to embody it (Mary Stuart, Dunois, Karl, Posa, etc., etc.). But Goethe creates men, and shows life as it *is*, not as it ought to be. A favourite subject for a school essay is: "How is it that Schiller succeeds in arousing our sympathies for Wallenstein in spite of his treason?" I'll tell you the answer—it's his treason that does it. Wallenstein belongs to the few *men* whom Schiller has put on the stage, and it is just his treason that is the human thing about him. "*Les passions, c'est toute la richesse morale de l'homme*," I must lay stress on that again and again, and a passionate man is sure not to be noble in the popular sense. Against this mental passivity of the spirit is also directed a couplet of Pope's, which I know, alas! only in a French translation:

"Plus notre esprit est fort, plus il faut qu'il s'agisse,  
*Il meurt dans le repos, il vit dans l'exercice.*"

### DIARY

29th October, 1909.—Just now we have neither the time nor the right to be mystics. What we need is

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people who will take hold of life, who have the energy to bring up new issues and carry them out; for I'm convinced that something new is coming—I feel it. It is brooding heavily in the air as a storm does, and soon, oh, very soon, it will thunder upon the world. Flashes of lightning have appeared on the horizon, the echoes of thunder have been heard in the air, but the great wild reckless storm, the storm that will make us abandon mediocrity and will set us free from all pettiness, has not yet come—yet soon it will break over us.

### DIARY

1st November, 1909.—I had a lot of books sent from the library for my *History of Literature*. I've now got to the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries, when the morality play takes the field and sometimes becomes very beautiful.<sup>18</sup>

In those historical folk-songs which Rochus Freiherr von Liliencron has published, there is tremendous power, particularly in those on the Battle of Pavia and in Hutten's songs:

“ I dared it willingly  
And nowise I repent,  
My strength I truly spent,  
Though won no victory.”

I know practically the whole poem by heart; it is gorgeous.

But what I'm most excited about is the song—practically a small epic—*Herzog Albrecht's Ritterschaft*.

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by Peter Suchenwirt.<sup>14</sup> I didn't expect to find anything like it, or discover so much in this professional rhymester. After all, it was a great age ! I am now speaking of all those who blazoned the new era forth with such vigour, even of Luther, with whom I have made my peace : for he has that one great merit, of having been the first to aim an effective blow at the Church, to set the ball rolling, and when once you have *begun* to doubt you don't stop at a mere beginning. Nietzsche stands on Luther's shoulders ; however contradictory this may sound, it's true. Luther was a man, a daring man, true to his convictions, and I honour him as I honour all heretics whom nothing could daunt.

### DIARY

19th November, 1909.—Motto :

O'er highest mountains !  
Through deepest caves !  
Most hidden fountains !  
—Through them, and Onward !

### DIARY

22nd November, 1909.—Great men must have terrific passions, and such wills, such self-control, that in a way they need only press a button to keep them back or let them out. Napoleon had that power, and chiefly therein, I expect, lay his great genius. What I said is true of moods, too. If you

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have always got to wait till nature or God puts you into the right mood, it isn't worth much. Of course, there will always be times when one is so completely swept off one's feet by a subject, that one is especially capable of doing creative work. But you can't count on these moods. Strength of will is everything, nothing can be achieved without it.

### DIARY

*25th November, 1909.*—We were at the little house.<sup>18</sup> It is winter out there, frost everywhere, everything is buried in snow. What wonderful atmospheres such early winters create, and what gorgeous colour-effects! Oh dear, if only I could paint!

### DIARY

*18th January, 1910.*—I finished reading Seuse's *Life*, Part I, and started Part II. I'm now getting to the philosophy of the period, and I've discovered something most extraordinarily interesting, the Averroists and Siger of Brabant. Those are the people who claim to have found twofold truth, but I think this is only an excuse, as they couldn't openly avow that the Bible is a lie. So Siger of Brabant, erroneously assumed to be a Thomist, is the leader of Averroism at the University of Paris. Now there is in existence a pamphlet, *Impossibilia*, published by Bacumker,<sup>19</sup> and considered to be the answer



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of an unknown author to Siger. But Mandonnet<sup>17</sup> avers that the whole thing is Siger's own work and that it belongs to the so-called *Sophismata*, which were put forward and refuted by the master as a school exercise in dialectics. I am for Baeumker, but I'll have all the literature about it sent me from the Royal Library.

### DIARY

*20th January, 1910.*—It is curious that in the darkness one can see even the tiniest glow, while in broad daylight it is difficult to see the biggest fire; I believe the same is true of human beings.

### DIARY

*10th February, 1910.*—I had a very interesting talk with father this morning. There is so much which leaves me unsatisfied at present. What is the purpose of Man, what is his origin? Where does all Life spring from, where do all things start?

### DIARY

*11th February, 1910.*—To-day Siger and Suso came. I was soon deep in them. I think I've now read everything of Siger's that Baeumker mentions. Suso has a wonderful tale from the *Book of the Nine Rocks*, which always used to be taken as the work of Seuse, but which probably originated with Rulman Merswin; it is a parable of fishes, and refers to immortality.

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This world is real *to us*, and we need never be afraid that it will suddenly dissolve like a dream, perhaps it also exists as a thing-in-itself, but that is beyond our ken. At bottom we know nothing at all, and I hate this business of everlasting speculation. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps, always the same thing. And, after all, what has it got to do with us? We exist, we think, we know. "How," doesn't matter; that we do, is the important thing. First of all, dear people, think of the future, and create a great Present. The man who acts has always ruled the world, and not the thinker.

My first task is, and will be for a long time to come, to get to know others, and then my second will be to let the others know me.

### TO HIS FRIEND, STEFAN L.

14th April, 1910.—I quite forgot to congratulate you on your acceptance (by the school) . . . I hope your power of adaptation will be strong enough for you to feel at home in your new surroundings. I didn't have that satisfaction. The world I lived in was too different, my feelings were too much unlike those of the others, to let me feel at home among them. And I'd like to give you one piece of advice. Remember this: be as reserved as possible, but *seem* as transparent as glass!

"Those few to whom the light was shown,  
Who could not hide their heart's rich treasure,  
But to the rabble made it known—  
Were burned and crucified for the mob's pleasure."

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And let me add : when later on in life you stand and trumpet forth great truths to mankind, and they burn you for it, don't be upset, because if Truth is really so mighty, it is *sure* to conquer one day. But it would be merely stupid for you to show your real self at school now! And don't be ambitious to be top—it's not worth the trouble. Perhaps others can master cramming better than you ; yet you are certainly worth more than they. One must get school over as quickly as possible, first day by day, and then altogether. Don't regard going to school as the beginning of a new epoch in your life, but divide your school and your life in such a way that you introduce into the latter the things that are useful in the former. But don't make yourself ridiculous by transferring the habits of your life, your feeling, and your thinking to school, and equally spoiling your life by importing into it silly-boy or model-youth habits from school. For the rest, remain yourself and wear a mask at school, but don't let the others notice it or you'll soon be one of the most hated boys there.

### TO HIS FRIEND, STEFAN L.

*Castel Toblino, 27th April, 1910.*—You've got excellent, really brilliant ideas, but if you don't mind my saying so, you often clothe them in rather artificial, vague and intentionally indefinite words. Just see for yourself if you do not often force yourself to

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use a form which doesn't come right out of your innermost being. Only that form which really comes from within can bring an idea worthily before the eyes of others. Search deeply, because that is a fault which, trifling now, will annihilate all your love of truth and sincerity if it is not kept within bounds.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Munich, 12th May, 1910.*—You get in Rembrandt's works a frothing and seething, a bubbling and foaming as if hell were boiling over; in its supreme expression he gets his terrific light. Rarely does he achieve repose or harmony, but when he does, they are super-human.

### DIARY

*27th June, 1910.*—I like E. T. A. Hoffmann very much. What magnificent and impressive work is *Kater Murr*, how witty and profound! But I can't write about these things that I'm fond of, this, *The Princess Brambilla*, and several others. His life and character are fascinating, too. To understand a great, a really great man, you need to know three things: the story of his life, the workings of his mind and the history of his time. *For the greatest thing in great men is always they themselves, not their work.*

### DIARY

*July, 1910.*—I am keeping this diary in order to account to myself, in order to be absolutely honest—towards myself . . .

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What I have to do above all things is to discipline my will, my energy, that they may be as rocks anchored in the earth, and as an arrow which can fly anywhere, and as a blow which vanquishes all things. I must work terrifically—"swot" and do just those things which are unpleasant, for only he who has drudged and groaned and borne heavy burdens may preach the gospel of the will and try to put himself beyond good and evil. Others merely use hollow phrases and empty words in order to mask their wanton thoughts.

### TO HIS FRIEND, STEFAN L.

*16th July, 1910.*—I was most interested in your letter. Listen to what I think of your conversation with Mr. S. If any one, whether they be eight or eighty years old, really feels the inner necessity of writing poetry, then, if they don't want to sin against themselves, they will write it, and only a person who doesn't feel artistically can talk of "storing up for the future." Now about things of "real" value, about the immature. What is "value," what does "immature" mean? If immature means incomplete, then every one is immature. Complete maturity would mean death. And it is pure nonsense to say that the works of the immature have less value for mankind, or none at all. It is the very writings of young people, of the immature, as Mr. S. is pleased to call them, that *are* valuable. (More-

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over some one of eighty can be young and a boy of eighteen old, and I believe your conversation was carried on with some one who was old.) It is in youth that ideas ferment, it is in youth that all really great ideas are born ; they issue in confusion and contradict themselves, but it is in their inspiration and energy that mankind will find salvation.

And then, when we are really old—and real old age is not a tired and weary thing, but rather something fresh, a time when one's ideas are clearer and calmer—then can we erect out of the rude blocks of marble and basalt which we accumulated in youth a mighty structure, possessing unity unto the last bit of ornamentation.

And now two more things. Firstly : whoever really believes that he uses himself up and actually does so in the stirring activities of youth, doesn't deserve to become anything. Only follow your *Daimon*, always, always follow your inner voice. If it tells you, compels you, to write a poem, then do it, and do not be led from the right path by the mere stupid talk of inartistic people. *And the right path lies within oneself*. Then secondly : you seem to assume as axiomatic that we are prodigies. That is not at all true. Prodigies are creatures brought up in the unnatural air of hot-houses, who spring up quickly, decay more quickly still, and then are justly forgotten. Prodigies are nearly always rotten and hollow inside and beautifully painted only on the surface. I'd rather have a short life like

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Alexander's, but one that is great, glorious, full of battle and honour, useful to mankind, than a long and insignificant one. Always obey your *Daimon*!

### DIARY

29th August, 1910.—I read *Zarathustra*, and I feel giddy. I am breathless and shaken. I will say nothing about it. I cannot. You must have done a good deal of systematic work—perhaps even pedantic work—not to be completely annihilated by such a *non plus ultra*.

### DIARY

14th September, 1910.—I've now read the first chapter of *Zarathustra* slowly over and over again. I'm still under the influence of the book to such an extent that I can say nothing. Just one thing: it is curious that I never heard of the principle of "self-realisation to the uttermost" from Nietzsche, only that of the *highest* fulfilment of duty, but in a different sense from the ordinary, of course. When I'd finished the chapter I took my Latin book and worked like mad, instead of reading another chapter, which I might have done. However, "what is difficulty? Thus asks the willing mind, thus it kneels like the camel wanting to be well-laden." But the parasites of humanity—and there are far too many of them—those who indulge their lusts and their coarse pleasures, their laziness and their deca-

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

dence under the cloak of Nietzsche, they are his real enemies ; the sort of people who do not wish to burden their minds with anything weightier than cigarette smoke, a few Beardsley drawings, and the rather more elaborately and ingeniously vicious novels of the Rococo. Generally speaking, one of the hereditary faults of the Germans seems to be that they are always anxious to find a moral justification for their vulgarities.

### DIARY

30th September, 1910.—To-day I worked steadily at Schönbach,<sup>18</sup> and took special care over the chapter on the *Lichtental Plaint of the Virgin*. I noted and compared every line that has been the subject of controversy. But all the same, I can't quite agree with Schönbach's judgment of its authorship. I think this is more likely : The writer of B. heard or read a *Plaint of the Virgin* as yet unknown to us (not just the thirteenth versicle of the translation of the cycle *Planctus ante nescia*), and is trying to reconstruct it from memory. For some passages are either completely re-written or else are quite unique, and their language is in parts so delicate that it seems impossible for them to be the work of the same man who perpetrated those raw repetitions and compilations identified by Schönbach. Then I read the *Platni of the Virgin* in the *Alsfelder Passion*. It is most beautiful.



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### DIARY

1st October, 1910.—The mystery play of the *Ten Virgins* is exquisite. The fierce power in the final laments, those moving appeals of Mary to Jesus, and then the moral *prudentes* and the gentle *fatuae*. Of course, the poet is on the side of the prudent ones who have filled their oil lamps and who afterwards refuse oil to the foolish virgins in a most unchristian manner.

### DIARY

19th November, 1910.—I wouldn't mind anything now if I only had some real work to do. I relieve my mind by writing this down: as soon as I have finished working at the *History of Literature* I shall start *Political Economy*. It seems to be the foundation of all politics and of all knowledge—all earthly knowledge. I want to be of this world, quite of this world. But at present I want very much to do some *creative* work. Something within me is urging me to it; there's something in me that must come out and that it will not out makes me quite unhappy. Every evening I go to sleep with a bad conscience and awake with it in the morning. It's beastly, and I want to get rid of it. Passive study alone doesn't satisfy me. I'm quite sure that nothing could ever completely satisfy me, but creative work, no pleasure, no reading, no love, no physical occupation. Nothing at all. I have just read the Easter play

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of *Muri*. Why, it is wonderful, and may surely be compared with the early Minnesingers without any hesitation. This play, with the *Ten Virgins* and *Theophilus* (only in the Turin manuscript), seem to be the most significant dramatic poems of the Middle Ages. It seems extraordinary that Creizenach appreciated these plays so little. How well Müllenhof would have treated them, whose beautiful and sympathetic essay about the love-poem I always remember. For instance, I think the section *Christ in the Depths* is really moving, and the purity of the rhymes is admirable. How alive some of it is, particularly where the Jews show the guards their posts and where Pilate speaks to the rabble! And the scene between Pilate and the guards, in which they announce the Resurrection. In short, it is a wonderful play, one of the few one can read for its own sake and not just to understand the historical development.

### DIARY

3rd December, 1910.—I have just read van Gogh's *Letters* which I had ordered for mother for Christmas. Heavens, what a man! What an artist! He seems to me immense. Think of his last letter to Gauguin. How this developed gradually, his passionate love for his art, and from the very beginning his ardent longing for conditions of life worthy of human beings (he lived for weeks on dry bread and coffee); and his unfaltering optimism, his joy in everything

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beautiful, which made him feel called upon to help others, and comfort them, like Gauguin ; this never-ceasing yearning for good health. Over and over again he asks : " When will a healthy generation of artists arise ? " Yet he had a great love of life and great confidence in himself. The book is indescribable. His was a fate worthy of the pen of the greatest of all artists, but he has already lived—van Gogh himself.

I read part of another book this afternoon which I'm also giving mother for Christmas and which has also deeply impressed me, namely, Nietzsche's *Collected Letters*. But all I can say of it now is, that just as after reading van Gogh, I am quite shattered, shaken to the foundations. They are both ploughshares that cut one to pieces and tear one up by the roots.

TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

17th December, 1910.—Don't you agree with me that we stand before a great new era which is only waiting for those who are now children in order to fulfil itself ? Or have you become too sophisticated to believe in any such thing ? You know, I think, that "sophistication" is the chief cause of the non-fulfilment of our ideals.

### DIARY

17th February, 1911.—There's a magnificent storm to-day, it rattles all the roofs, a real spring storm. I

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couldn't go on dully working. I tore out and ran races with the dogs and the storm. One could hardly walk, but it was *glorious*. That's the kind of weather I love.

" Mistral wind thou cloud wrack chaser,  
Sorrow-slayer, Heaven sweeper,  
Roaring singer—how I love thee ! "

I don't know if that's how it goes, but it's glorious, divine !

### DIARY

*24th March*, 1911.—I want to train my spirit, not put it in shackles and bonds, but fortify it so that it may be capable of great passions which will not flicker out, that it may bear great burdens and achieve much. I want to compress it, make it firm as granite rock. But I would rather have this actually happen than be merely writing it. I stand before myself now clearer and freer.

### DIARY

*10th April*, 1911.—I've just finished the first section of Burckhardt.<sup>10</sup> I'd rather not criticise it, for one can't talk about so magnificent a book. I'd just like to say how I imagine some things : Deep down in his heart, perhaps unconsciously, Cæsar Borgia, like all great dæmonic geniuses, wanted to attain the good, the good in a higher sense, of course. The only point I don't like in Burckhardt, if it's not

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an "emendation" of Herr Geiger's, is that he denies Caesar a dæmonic character.

### DIARY

*16th April, 1911.*—Youth!! It seems to me the "old" people are much younger. At the end of every ancient civilisation and at the gates of every new one there has been a decadence, a dying out of the corrupt. But just tell me, has there ever been such a vulgar, cowardly, shabby decadence as ours? No, we stand alone. And I ask again, has there ever existed such prostitution of all emotion, such wanton abandonment of all strength and seriousness, such methodical destruction of all nobility in Man (cut me not in pieces, oh modern youth, for this word!) as among the "cultured classes" of to-day? No, say I, ten times No! But he who says an emphatic "No" must also say an emphatic "Yes," and he who sees shadows must bring sunshine. For this were we given the sight of our eyes, and for this was imagination given unto us, that we might have the vision of day created out of night. And for this were will and power given unto us, that we might create the day. And again, for this was the light of our eyes given us, and imagination, and will, and power, that we might rejoice in the day, and dance, and play, and steel ourselves afresh for the battle.

### DIARY

*19th April, 1911.*—The birches suddenly burst into leaf overnight. They are exquisite!

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### DIARY

*Florence, 29th April, 1911.*—What a lovely drive through the Berne Gorge with those magnificent outer forts, which threaten Austria with such a brotherly greeting for their worthy Allies! Arrived in Florence at half-past five on the 26th. At my first glimpse of the Palazzo Vecchio and the Loggia dei Lanzi I was quite struck dumb. The magnificence of the building overwhelmed me. You can see it from our window, and the Loggia too, with the glorious Cellini, Menelaus and Patroclus and the mourning German woman. And then, when I stood on the Loggia and saw away above it the towers of Santa Maria Novella and Santa Croce and the Campanile and the dome of the Cathedral! I feel as if I had been quite two weeks in Florence. I know my way about the town so well and feel so truly at home here at the foot of the Palazzo Vecchio, the shrine of the Uffizi and in the churches of Arnolfo and Giotto.

### DIARY

*2nd May, 1911.*—Spent the morning in San Marco. It is rather wonderful that everything has been kept in its original place, it makes you feel more like a guest of the monks here than if you were in a museum. It is lovely to walk about the passages in front of the cells, or even sit in one of them, maybe in the spot in which Fra Angelico's delicate brush painted

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the Coronation of Mary with really angelic art. In silence and submission the Virgin bends her head, she and Our Lord clad in simple white raiment, and below, the saints and martyrs, scarred, some of them arranged in almost mathematical order. The complete simplicity is characteristic of all his painting, which achieves unbelievable effect with a few strokes of the brush and just a few colours. Just think of the exquisite Crucifixion below in the Refectory. What an overwhelming impression is made by the picture of the swooning Mary (with all its primitive stiffness) and the group of men on the right beneath the Cross ! Particularly beautiful is St. Dominic in the middle of the wash-board which supports the tree, as if it were the root from which all the great saintly Dominicans grew. I think his eyes are the most wonderful eyes I have ever seen, with an ascetic, fanatical power such as the Indian fakir possesses. He looks straight out of the picture, carrying the tree lightly in his hand, his lips compressed, his face fallen in, sunken, but his eyes glittering. His look haunts you long afterwards. Then we stepped outside again into the cross-passage, and saw the beautiful, peaceful pictures over the doors, St. Peter the Martyr, symbol of Silence, the glorious picture of two monks sheltering Christ as a poor wayfarer. And how pleasant it is to go up the wide stair again and in Michelozzo's well-proportioned library gaze at the miniatures which took the " simple " and devoted monks years

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to do. And then to sit down under the big pine-tree, or wander into the other cloister-yard, now quite deserted. One could almost forget life! But no—rather one is spurred on to further speculation about life.

### DIARY

*Milan, 14th May, 1911.*—After seeing San Ambrogio, we drove to the Cenacole. At first, not much is recognisable, but when you have looked into it a little longer, hands and faces appear, and a mighty miracle is revealed in all its splendour. It is not till then that one appreciates the amazing diversity; each figure is different and yet each is true and obvious. In the midst, Christ, resigned and all-knowing, and yet suffering and patient. The word went forth from Him who is the embodiment of serenity, the focus of all movement, the word which caused so much excitement among the disciples. If one knew nothing else of the Passion, one could read the whole story in this picture. . . . Then we drove to the Cathedral. The impression produced by the façade with its Renaissance windows stuck on is not exactly pleasant. I did not particularly like the structure of it, its main plan, as it were, especially its appearance from the outside. It seems as if on the outer side of the nave rests a transept monstrously out of proportion, with a giant choir, so that that part of the church which, in any sensible arrangement, ought to be its backbone and



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give it real support, *i.e.*, the nave, here seems almost to be breaking down. But when we stepped inside, from afar off came the sound of superb singing, and in the intervals the marvellous swell of the organ. Massive pillars support the ceiling which strives upward to giddy heights. Patches of sunshine glow through great windows in glittering colours. The choir seems immense, and everything soared upwards, high, high up; there was nothing depressingly close or shut in, no Christian demeanour about it, but a jubilant hymn, a Tower of Babel! Oh, here I'd like to stand one day, here at the high altar, and when the organ has wakened the echoes, announce and tell of a new humanity, a new power and a new Song of Songs that hastens through the world on the wings of an eagle, bringing with it joy and happiness. And my words will ring forth with the strains of the organ, along the pillars up to the skies, and out into every corner of the world.

### DIARY

16th May, 1911.—Home again at last. It was delightful to be with Pa<sup>re</sup> again and in our little house. And I can't measure the good this journey will have done me. I hope that I have got over that awful feeling of want of confidence for the present. I'm overflowing with ideas and ideas in the making. The garden is beautiful beyond conception; an immense roof of oak-leaves and below it lilies of the valley and flowering shrubs.

## PART II

EXTRACTS FROM DIARIES AND LETTERS WRITTEN  
BETWEEN THE AGES OF FOURTEEN AND SEVENTEEN



## FOREWORD TO PART II

THE increasing restlessness of the growing youth—in this section we follow him from his fourteenth to his seventeenth year—spurs him on to more earnest endeavour and still greater devotion. To the unconditional claims of his *Daimon* are added the claims of his world and time. These bind him, and impose obligations on him, down to the very smallest activity. But in this limitation and restriction he discerns the highest freedom. To subdue things to pure form is for him the height of the divine.

Of the diversity of his occupations these excerpts from diaries and letters give but an inadequate and scanty picture. Yet what signifies his thirst for knowledge in face of his clear vision and his power of making things his own? If the boy sought to strengthen his emotions in pictures and books, the youth yields himself up all the more completely to them. He censures his own faults unrelentingly, he stands in inexorable judgment on himself, but outside things he endeavours to comprehend in their essence, to grasp unfalteringly both what is remote and near. And he can dare to do it without fearing to become cold or stale, for ever and again he surrenders himself devoutly to Nature, ever and again he visualises fantastic shapes, which dance around him in sweet-natured play; ever intenser grows the surging sea of his emotions, and his soul is quickened in silent meditation.



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### DIARY

1st June, 1911.—It is not the ascetic, to my mind, who is furthest from becoming a profligate and a voluptuary, but the man to whom this sort of behaviour does not even occur, and who can, therefore, indulge in pleasures, even to excess, without the slightest fear of becoming a profligate.

### DIARY

4th June, 1911.—Life cannot exist without devotion to an ideal, which one must have conceived for oneself. For life is struggle, struggle for an object. But this implies devotion to a cause, giving oneself up completely to something.

### DIARY

5th June, 1911.—*Wilhelm Meister*. Death of Mignon. How wonderful it is that just at the very moment at which Wilhelm abandons himself to the bourgeois serenity, embodied in Teresa, Mignon dies. I have been thinking a great deal about all these things, so much so that I must let them grow clear now, like my impressions of Florence; I am not afraid that they will vanish or grow cold.

### DIARY

11th June, 1911.—One of the most striking characteristics of *Wilhelm Meister* is that each person's

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character is only explained inductively from his life. Things are vaguely indicated, one somehow "senses" them. But for that very reason the people are all the more tender and more sensitive. Even in the case of a seeming bear like St. Christopher you still find a little of the "beautiful soul." How extraordinarily many sided Goethe was, not only in the subjects he treats, but also in his style, language, delineation of character, and—there is no one word for it—but perhaps one could say, in the *modulation* of his language.

### DIARY

*22nd June, 1911.*—I believe it is quite possible to feel and conceive Antiquity, the Renaissance, Rembrandt, as the highest, though perhaps varying expressions, of *one and the same* Spirit. But I can only dimly divine Spirit, I cannot give it a name.

### DIARY

*Dresden, 22nd July, 1911.*—In the afternoon went to the Hygiene Exhibition. Oh, what a people were the Greeks! And yet here one gets to know only their so-called "external" civilisation. Nothing can make us more ashamed than a comparison of this tremendous civilisation with our own. Later in the evening, walking along the illuminated Hercules Avenue, I was still so overwhelmed by it,

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that I thought that the new civilisation which is coming—for come it must—will be for the greater part Hellenic. I do not mean, of course, that an appetising stew, such as a good cook might make, would result out of a hotch-potch of the Greeks and the Moderns, Socialism and Nietzsche; but he who will inaugurate the new civilisation will unconsciously have within him a spirit which is partly akin to that of the Greeks. At all times out of the major impressions of every growing man there has always been *one* thing which has seemed of greater importance than everything else; it is on it that he inwardly concentrates, from it he derives content. But this need not happen only when old things are breaking down, it can also happen when a new era is a completion, or rather a fulfilment, of an old one; it will stand before us mighty as the Magnetic Mountain of the Middle Ages, attracting all things to itself, throwing out everything irrelevant, taking in everything that is relevant, giving it new vitality and power. Yesterday and to-day, for the first time, there was somehow shown to me, with great and monumental force, that immense thing: the Ancient World. I think I can both see and feel that this is the vital force from which the future will develop. When the new civilisation has gone through all the purging fires of the Modern, its inner majesty will be closely related to that of the ancients; that prophecy of Gemisthos Pleton is nearing its fulfilment:



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"A religion will arise which all men will accept; it will be neither Christian nor heathen, but one very like the latter."

I see a Being striding towards us through the streets of the German capital, a red flag in his hands, a man like the heroes of old, and I see him conquering the worthless generations and princes of to-day—ephemerals with no marrow or backbone—and I see him founding a new Empire with strong and noble human beings, splendid and great in a newly-built city, resplendent with arcades and thermal baths, gymnasiums and wide thoroughfares, an antique-modern Empire.

But who can blame me if in my dreams I put myself in the place of such a man? Are not wishes the forerunners of accomplishment, and does not one's capacity grow with one's aim?

Then to the Albertinum. Glorious! A magnificent, deliriously beautiful Mænad of Skopas. (?) The most important thing was that I did succeed in getting a complete picture, even if only for a moment, of the Ancient World as I described my feeling of it above.

### DIARY

*29th July, 1911.*—I am working tremendously. Before I went to Florence I had the time, but no ideas and no thoughts. Now that I have got the ideas, I have no time. But I prefer this state of affairs. For ideas are within you and can be grasped, even if they are not

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put into execution immediately. Time, however, lies outside us and so can only be made use of when we have it; it cannot be stored. A period of "swotting," and with the aim of learning Greek, Latin and mathematics, is never bad. But a period of laziness which is not rest after creative work, but rather the popular "*dolce far niente*"—horrid! I drew these parallels: laziness = decay, lazy = lazy.\*

### TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

26th August, 1911.—I think of you so often in my present state of tremendous enthusiasm for this people of Hellas, their language, their philosophy, their art, their poets and their historians. Do write and tell me whether you, too, are quite under the spell of this most wonderful, concrete-minded people! Do you know the Pythagorean Table of Categories? Above it on the left is *πέρας*, on the right *ἄπειρον*. *Πέρας*, the constructed, the formed, that which is embodied, which, just because of its perfection of form, is capable of creating the most powerful, magnificent and passionate images in marble and in speech. For pleasure in the body, in the sensuously beautiful, has been the means of creating profound things, profound even in ideas. Plato was a Hellene. The other is *ἄπειρον*, the overwhelming, surging, chaotic, shattering, that which has within it the

\* Play on words in the original: *Faulheit* = *Fäulniss*, *faul* = *faul*. [Tr. note.]

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power of producing wonderful things ; for where such profound and great principles of the universe are in question, "good" and "bad" of course disappear. Only a puffed-up frog would dare to apply such a measure to immense and mighty cultural contrasts such as these. They *do* exist and must be taken into consideration, but, of course, it is obvious that one person will find himself more akin to the one, and another to the other, and each will think the opposite is the thing to be fought against. I won't explain the *ἀρετὴν* any further for I see that you have been occupied with Indian mysticism a good deal lately, and it is clear, of course, that this is the classical *ἀρετὴν*. As I said, we must leave good and bad out of it at present, but if you personally do feel drawn towards the magic marvels in that land of the Inconceivable and the Inexplicable (I own that I am greatly attracted by much of it too), I wish you would consider, nevertheless, whether that really is the force from which *our* salvation will come, which will produce great people and great works for *us*, and to which *we*, therefore, ought to devote ourselves.

### DIARY

*Hamburg, 7th September, 1911.*—It was lovely to find Pa waiting for us in Berlin, and he came with us to Hamburg. The very first evening we went to see Lederer's Bismarck. The statue was but vaguely recognisable ; its main outlines seemed gigantic,

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though already they were vanishing in the darkness of night.

### DIARY

*Hamburg, 8th September, 1911.*—A drive round the harbour. Gorgeous ! There lay immense hulks in dock waiting to be loaded, destined for the ends of the earth ; soon, with unwearying industry, they would be taking away and bringing back produce from all over the world. Between them, little motor launches and steam-boats flitted to and fro, now cutting the agitated waters before them, now flooded by them. We stood in the bow of a boat and were soon wet through. Past all the crannies and recesses we sailed, past the locks and canals, the wharves and docks of this tremendous harbour, touching now Australian petrol boats, now Norwegian pleasure-craft. How glorious it is to see these thousands of people working incessantly, and how terrible when you seek the cause. Hundreds of slaves toiling to get the oil to land, that shall serve for lighting ; is it to provide for gay and happy people, gathered together in warm and comfortable houses, where those who love may read poetry aloud, or gaze at pictures of the great masters ? Where young people may listen to the words of the Edda or of Homer, or become enthusiastic over *Faust* or *Zarathustra* ? Is it for this ? No ! it is that old women may become blind at their embroidery frames, earning a few pennies ; that wretched beings may sit in miserable hovels

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painting toys from morning till night, from youth to old age ; or that some one in his first free moment may fetch out his latest Nick Carter or Lord Lister "yellow-backs" and nourish his morbid thoughts thereon. It is for these things that thousands of beings work, for these things that the great drama of the harbour is played. And then the workers themselves, living on miserable wages under conditions unworthy of human beings, embittered, or what is even worse, *contented* with their lot ; working far away from things that make life great or worth living ; sitting at night in stinking holes or in low public-houses, seeking a short period of oblivion from their misery in filthy pleasures, with wine and prostitutes ; in short, a flock of sheep, herded together ; and yet, to keep them in this apathy is the foundation-stone of present-day society—but it is also one of its unforgivable crimes.

In the evening we went to the Uhlenhorst ferry. Sat there for a long time. The sun, a red and glowing ball, shed fiery beams upon the clouds around as it disappeared behind the trees ; grey trees, dull and shadowy in the distance, but deep green nearer by. The clouds change slowly from a reddish glow to violet shadings. Far away before us into the dim distance stretches the Alster, every colour of the rainbow glistening in its waves. In the foreground it is bright, rosy-hued, almost white, its smooth, glimmering surface broken only by occasional dark ripples. A great black barge, pushed laboriously by

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

one workman, draws slowly by ; a second follows. A white house rises dimly between the trees above the water. The clouds turn grey. Now there is nothing left but a pale, soft glow, spreading peacefully over the whole sky. The Alster, violet yet, but with blue ripples dancing in the foreground, grows gradually more silent. Yellowish-brown tones merge into grey, then turn deep blue and melt away in the distance. Soon they will have spread over the whole expanse.

### DIARY

*Teneriffe,*<sup>u</sup> 17th September, 1911.—Quite early to Las Palmas. There through narrow streets to the Cathedral. In a chapel, on the right, they were celebrating Mass. Going in you could see only the red painted walls, not the altar. Women in black and white mantillas were kneeling in front of it in most artistic groups. Some had their faces turned in profile towards the red wall, but most of them stood with their backs towards us. There were only a few men. A dim light that was brightened by Sanctus lamps and candles was shed over all. As we turned to go, Mass ended. The women rose, proudly and very calmly crossed themselves, then went with raised heads and queenly grace, like the women of Ghirlandajo ; no haste or hurry ; their walk, erect and beautiful, breathed pride and peace. After that we drove back. From on board the Pic of Teneriffe could be seen but faintly, dwindling in the distance,

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while in the morning it had stood out sharply. Our beautiful ship glided softly by Gran Canaria, with its rugged cliffs, towards Teneriffe. Most of the time both coasts were in sight, and the magnificent Pic towered aloft, shut in by low hills. At two o'clock we went by train to Laguna. It wound up the hill-side in long curves, and all the time we had the beautiful view over the blue sea and Santa Cruz. We thought we saw the *Eber* or the *Berlin* in the distance; they came from Agadir to coal. Great masses of curiously uncanny, ghostly-looking cacti grow wild all around. Along the streets in almost unbroken rows are the little four-cornered houses, mostly painted pink, with bluish frameworks and green shutters. The higher you get the more luxuriant becomes the vegetation. Below, vines, bananas and palms. Such magnificent trees! Too proud to allow even the smallest branch to shoot out below the crown, it is only at the very top that they unfold their full beauty; and the straight, firm trunks have to support alone the abundance of leafage spread out on every side. Beneath we can still see Santa Cruz and the ocean, and far away, the hills of Las Palmas, only faintly outlined, as if with a silver-pointed pencil, their lower half covered by long streaks of clouds.

Now Laguna. Our luggage is taken by hurrying boys, anxious for a tip, and is dragged, whether we will or no, to a hotel, where we drink coffee. An hour later we take the train again. The hills grow

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wider apart, the narrow, gloomy foothills vanish, and in the distance the Pic soars upwards, bathed in sunlight. We drive into a magnificent avenue of eucalyptus trees. They exhale a glorious scent which drugs the senses. I can no longer decide where to turn my gaze, whether to the ancient houses simply piled up out of thick stones, the mule caravans, the people who all seem to have too much time, the foothills disappearing in the background, or those just appearing grouped round the Pic, the fields of maize, the adventurous clumps of cacti or the blue eternal ocean, lying tranquilly in the sunshine below, inexpressibly beautiful. See how it gently ripples, how its waves break as they beat upon the rocks, or how it glitters in endless iridescent colours! Now it seems yellow, now blue—such a deep blue that you could gaze your eyes to death on it, now quivering red, then black and white, then silver, then again green, then violet and golden, gilded by the sun, outshone, caressed, fondled and kissed by it.

We stop at an hotel just outside Tacoranta. In ten minutes the car is to be in Orotava. It takes quite one and a half hours. That is the same in Spanish time as ten minutes for us. Meanwhile we stand on the roof of the hotel and gaze at the Pic and the sea. At last, about six, the car comes. We drive along a very zig-zag road by the sea. There is some danger of falling down the precipice, but I forget everything in the splendour of the view; the hills rise majestically, dark and rugged close by, but



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curving in beautiful symmetrical lines down to the sea. Supreme above all the Pic towers. Beside it eucalyptus and pepper trees, cacti, bananas and palms in glorious profusion. The sun is no longer high in the heavens. In a few minutes it will set. Mules and dromedaries with heavy burdens pass by, women with beautifully curved jars upon their heads, men with carts drawn by oxen full of banana crates. Thin clouds veil the sky. Then the sun-god dips into the calm sea. It grows ever darker; lanterns are lighted; we drive over great viaducts and through roads hewn out of the mountain-side. It is very strange going through such an unknown part of a country for the first time in deep darkness. The imagination is still able to seize even the remotest resemblances of things, and holds on to whatever it has seized. Then we drove once more into dense eucalyptus avenues; their end was hidden by the night and they appeared infinite. Cacti rose up into monstrous shapes, queer forms grew out of the romantic trees and hills. Now it was deep night; only the lights of the car threw beams before us. Villages disappeared with hills and clouds in shrouded darkness. Sea and sky were almost one. . . .

### DIARY

*Teneriffe, 20th September, 1911.*—In the afternoon we went to the end of the town of Orotava. A little temple is built there with most surprising taste on

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a rock. But inside, instead of Apollo, there was a Crucifix. To get there we had to go through filthy streets, filled with dirty begging children ; but they looked charming. Mother said, " There are no happy isles." But the sun glittered and shone over the water which came dashing against the rocks ; palms and eucalyptus trees stood out against the sky, the Pic loomed proudly, naked boys ran about and bathed, beautiful girls looked smilingly out at windows, and wistaria and flowering shrubs breathed forth their fragrance. Great rocks stemmed the on-coming waves, the white temple gleamed in the distance. Was not Apollo in it after all ? The sun sank, shedding its last golden rays over the whole scene. Sad faces of mothers behind the windows. Will there never be happy isles ?

Left at 9.30. Looking back, we had wonderful views. Orotava could still be seen in the distance, and our bathing rocks, and the Pic. And then the exquisite view from the Humboldt corner ; wide meadows, gently sloping in the sunshine to the sea, bananas, vines and between them palms, the background bounded by low hills, and towering above all, the Pic. The car drove with mad speed, and endless poplar and eucalyptus avenues shot past. We stopped once again in Laguna to see the dragon-tree which is said to be three thousand years old. What a marvellous sight ! Innumerable branches shooting up almost vertically from an enormously thick trunk, their bark split like oaks, only brown,

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flattening out towards the top and there, quite high up, wearing a crown that looks as if it had been cut off on top, and resembles pine needles. I climbed up to the flat part where the branches divide. It was gorgeous up there. Then we drove on. Again the sea widened; at first it was indistinguishable from clouds, but later became animated with innumerable "white horses." . . . At the Humboldt corner I dreamed how adventurous Greek sailors brought their high-masted ships here for the first time, saw the Pic and the magic trees and flowers beneath, a smiling and yet heroic landscape, with meadows, sweet-scented plants and shrubs, and rough, jagged cliffs and hills. Returning home, they related to their astonished people how they had found the heavenly isle, Elysium. The Greeks thereupon made it the home of their heroes, and only once, very shyly, did one man dare to tread the consecrated ground.

### DIARY

23rd September, 1911. (*On the Ship.*)—Journey from Teneriffe home. I began Thomas More's *Utopia*.

### DIARY

24th September, 1911. (*On the Ship.*)—Finished the *Utopia*. It is an extraordinary piece of work, and

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in the first part shows a knowledge and discernment of economic conditions which is almost incredible. It makes Utopias like Bellamy's pale into insignificance. Quite admirable, too, are the penetrating investigations into the origin of stealing which attribute it to bad upbringing, adverse economic conditions, scarcity of the means of livelihood and high prices of raw materials. In the main body of the *Utopia* itself there is, among a great deal that is excellent, a certain amount that is too rationalistic, and more than once one has an unpleasant impression of a state constructed not of people, but of schemes. . . .

Once again I borrowed from the ship's library Diederich's old Almanack, *Jena and Weimar*. It has some excellent things in it, particularly in the "German Educational Ideals of a Hundred Years ago" . . . Fichte : "To act ! To act ! That is what we are here for." Friedrich von Schlegel : "There exists a beautiful frankness which blossoms like a flower, only to shed its fragrance." "The life of the universal spirit is an unbroken chain of inner revolutions ; all individuals, that is to say, all primal eternal ones, live therein. He is a true polytheist and carries the whole of Olympus within himself" . . . "Every one, the aim and object of whose existence is to cultivate his spirit, is an artist" . . . Humboldt : "There is no grander emotion, none stronger in depth or endurance, none which abandons itself with a nobler awe to that

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supernatural and dominating power which rules us all, than that which makes Hector exclaim: 'For the day will come when sacred Ilias must sink,' and yet makes him continue the great fight uninterruptedly." In saying this, Humboldt, I think, has expressed one of the deepest truths about human nature, a wonderful truth which many may have dimly perceived but which no one has expressed so well. The beginning of this dictum about Greek melancholy is splendid too. I should like to read more of both him and Schlegel.

How I am looking forward to home! I can hardly wait for it! I would like best to go by train from Brussels. To be with Pa again at last! I have been imagining all the details, how lovely it is going to be!

### DIARY

25th September, 1911. (*On the Ship*.)—I began *The Labour Question*, by F. A. Lange, and read the first chapter over and over again. I found it extraordinarily stimulating. It may be true that in the animal world, as Darwin says, the fittest survive in the struggle for existence, for there the only measure is physical force, cunning and cleverness, but human beings have other measures, and the coarse brute who overcomes the less clever ones in the struggle and reduces them to poverty is by no means the really better person. And then we cannot say that the weaker was justifiably subjugated, and that if he

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has great intellectual or emotional gifts he will prove himself the fitter in other fields. That is quite wrong, because in the struggle for wealth, which, more than any other, calls forth bad and worthless qualities, everything is involved; and in their anxiety about their daily bread people do not get the opportunity to develop their capacities to the utmost. That is why the main problem will be how to create equal conditions for the struggle; and, after all, the fundamental assumption of socialism is that human beings must first be given security of livelihood, in order that all may be able to develop their innate capacities to their fullest extent. But, of course, there will have to be a system of education quite different from our present one, if the people are to be equipped on equal terms for the *real* fight.

### DIARY

6th October, 1911. (*Home again.*)—I started straight away re-reading the oldest German poems—that magnificent one, *Heaven and Hell*, and then the *Hildebrand Song*, with an exact interlinear version—so that I could compare every word with a facsimile of the original.

### DIARY

7th October, 1911.—What Lange says (in the second chapter) about the law of the struggle for

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supremacy is excellent. But his apparent assumption that everybody is equal from birth seems remarkable. If that were the case, then the cry for equality, which he thinks justifiable because of it, would be awful. If everybody obtained the same powers from the same mental nourishment—ugh! Zeus protect me from the world! No, it is because all people are unequal, and only because of that, that I want absolute equality of conditions.

### DIARY

14th October, 1911.—A very interesting article in the *Berliner Tageblatt* that the Triple Alliance is out-lived and now represents no more than an empty form. But the inference that Germany and Austria alone can show a united front to all the other powers seems to me wrong, and it is not enough to take the annexation of Bosnia as a proof, because the Powers did not want to let loose a world war on that account. But I should like very much to see (or rather I would not like it at all!) what Germany and Austria would do if England crippled their maritime commerce, if Russia sent no corn and the Argentine and other countries no meat; in short, if all our relations with the outer world were cut off, as would surely have to happen in a real war—not in such a miniature affair as that between Italy and Turkey. The others would be able to get on without us for a time.

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Countries.	In thousand tons.				In millions sterling.	In 100 heads.
	Rye.	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.	Fishery.	Cattle.
Germany and Austria-Hungary . . .	13,562	10,658	11,947	6,283	1.00	67,686
Rest of Europe	72,342	41,489	132,282	14,488	29.52	130,689

This table shows the production of the various foods in these countries. I worked it out with much trouble from a Table of Production in the big Seydlitz. It is taken from conditions in 1906. This, excluding imports and exports, works out per head of population per annum at :—

In	Rye.	Wheat.	Barley.	Oats.	Fishery.	Cattle.
Germany and Austria-Hungary . . .	0.12	0.09	0.11	0.05	—	0.6
Rest of Europe	0.23	0.19	0.46	0.04	—	0.42

Most probably the calculation is not correct, or, at any rate, very inexact. But it says in Seydlitz that there were 20,590,000 head of cattle per 60 million inhabitants in Germany in 1906, while Russia had 34,400,000 with 106 million inhabitants. Russia would have to produce about two million head of



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cattle more if every person in Russia is to eat as much beef as in Germany. If we take into consideration as well the smaller productive power of German soil compared with Russian (this is the reason for the smaller number of cattle), it will probably be found that, if all the frontiers were blocked, there would not be sufficient food for the whole of the population of Germany. In these circumstances each individual would look out for himself, and would buy without any consideration for the community as a whole. And it is fairly certain that with the continuous rise of prices following thereupon, a revolution would break out.

I want to take up the history of Literature again and work at it systematically: Luther, Murner, Erasmus, Hutten, Brant, Humanism, polemics against Luther and anything else that belongs to that period.

### DIARY

*15th October, 1911.*—As Lamprecht says quite admirably in his Introduction: "A complete description of the growth of mankind . . . can only be given from the intuitive standpoint of the artist." That is perfectly true. But when he seeks to derive the whole evolution of art, of literature, of everything, from the development of a monetary system, I don't know whether he is not confusing cause and effect, for the same development which led on the one hand to the discovery of the world and to the exten-

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sion of commercial relations, led on the other hand to the discovery of man, to civilisation. . . .

We are living in a time of transition, in a searching time, that is without authority, shapeless, torn, chaotic, but which is nevertheless a wonderful time, not exceptional in itself from an observer's point of view, but absolutely invaluable as an enemy, a stimulator. I know of no epoch in which so many new gates were to be opened, in which there was so much to fight against, so much to be created, so much to be destroyed and then to be built anew.

### DIARY

17th October, 1911.—Finished the introduction to Lamprecht. Some of it is very interesting, but I disagree with a great deal. When he defines religion, with Schleiermacher, as "the emotional view of the universe by the individual mind" and brings back all religion to the relation between the individual and the universe (God) I think he is completely and fundamentally wrong. That is just the Protestant conception, which we ought to oppose tooth and nail.

In those times in which religion had a great and profound meaning for the whole of civilisation (early Greek times, northern religions, the time of Rome and the Middle Ages) *religion was always a thing of the people*. It meant the unification of the people that they might attain to God. Nobody dreamt of thinking, consciously or unconsciously, of an emo-

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tional union of the individual with God. In those times the individual hardly existed at all, and therefore he could not very well identify himself with the universe. Evidently that did not find much favour with the Greeks and Romans for, in spite of all theories to the contrary, these people were damnably unsentimental; they were almost unsentimentality itself. And yet such peoples were religious, though not in the most modern sense, or as Pastor J. means it, when he comes along with a lot of fine-sounding phrases and makes a hodge-podge (I will not say what sort of one!) of spiritual things, and materialism, and all the rest. But I want to be honest. I myself, Otto Braun, have only a "feeling" of what religion really is; a definition, alas! I have not yet got. So far I only know what religion is *not*.

### DIARY

19th October, 1911.—What exquisite things there are in Homer! That incomparable passage where Athene ties on the *καλά πέδιλα*, the beautiful sandals, and takes hold firmly and fearlessly of the mighty spear. *βριὺν μέγα σιβαρόν*. But then:—

"βῆ δὲ κατ', Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων αἶψα  
στῆ δ' Ἰθακῆς ἐνὶ δῆμῳ ἐπὶ προθύροις Ὀδυσῆος  
οἶδός ἐπ' αὐλείου παλάμῃ δ' ἔχε χάλκεον ἔγχος,  
εἰδομένη ξείνῳ, Ταψίων ἡγήτορι, Μέντη.

The very sound of this *βῆ δὲ κατ', Οὐλύμποιο* and

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then στή δ' Ἰθάκης ἐνὶ δῆμῳ gives a wonderful feeling of strength. And then the most beautiful of all, δίξασα; a ringing, heavy, swelling sound that is exquisite is brought into this by the spondee, which, after all, consists only of two single feet. It paints an exact picture of the owl-eyed goddess like Nike wafted down to earth, while the wind which bears her tosses her cloak. Just think for a moment of the beautiful work of Paionios. High on the summit of a temple it stood, striding along and about to glide off, βῆ δὲ κατ' Οὐλύμποιο καρήνων it leaves the heights of Olympus. There's a great similarity of idea between the poet of 800 and the artist of 420.

### DIARY

24th October, 1911.—The *Death of Titian* ought to be read as twilight is falling, in beautiful surroundings, if possible in the open air under a clear starry sky, and in the company of clear-souled people, young people; that will put them into an eager, questioning frame of mind. But the song of *Hammer's Return*, or *Voluspa*, and the songs of *Sigurd and Helgi*, *Prometheus*, and the like, should be read when the wind is roaring in the oaks and the leaves are falling, when the trees are clothed in glittering, golden yellow and all Nature is one riot of colour. I love best those who can be both strong and fierce, and calm and beautiful.

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### DIARY

28th October, 1911.—How magnificent the autumn is here ! We have roses in our garden, hundreds of them, and what roses ! There are large heavy ones, red, open and full-blown, glowing, alluring, with scented calyxes ; dull yellow ones with big deep yellow leaves, their petals falling silently ; and young ones, just budding, promising and yearning, proud and beautiful. I love those most. They are queens, radiantly beautiful, with dull veining, not yet bent with ardent passion, standing erect on slender stems, very tender and immature, but oh ! so proud and stately. I am holding her in my hand, the Queen of the Roses, and I drink in her heavenly scent. And the trees and shrubs, a delirious and intoxicating mass of colour in blazing gold, with that beautiful golden yellow that some grapes have, that makes them unlike anything else ; for other fruits may *taste* good, but the vine is sacred, dedicated to Dionysos and the Bacchic gods.

### DIARY

12th November, 1911. —After all the opinions I have expressed about politics it might be thought that I favour a completely nationalist policy. But this is only true within limits. I think, in fact I know, that every civilisation has been *national*, that a nation, a people, can uphold its civilisation only by asserting itself, and fighting against others. This, of course,

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does not preclude one from saying of the very greatest Titans they were not Germans, Frenchmen, Italians, Greeks, etc.; they were above all bounds of nationality; human beings pure and simple. None the less, the soil on which they grew was a national soil. And that is why I think it necessary, taking the interests of humanity in general into consideration, for individual nations to follow a really egotistical policy, as the social democrats would have to do if they were at the head of affairs. The objection will be made that we have been pursuing a nationalist policy for forty years, and no great culture has ensued. But I reply that we have been pursuing a shifting policy, a policy of alliances, of compromises, and so on, but never a really strong and *powerful* policy, one that would sweep all before it. That can be seen from the slight respect in which Germans are held, and from the fact that we have managed, by superhuman strokes of genius, to bring things to such a pass that France, England and Russia have made distinct and close alliances, while we have to search, like Diogenes, for *one* country to be a true friend. Is it to be Austria? Or Turkey, whose Government is continually alternating between Anglophil and Germanophil Cabinets? Such are the consequences of a feeble policy, and yet it has become almost a matter of tradition for us to pursue it. . . .

I feel there can only be two forms of the State, a

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*monarchy*, the rule of one, and a *democracy*, the rule of the people. The former can very easily grow out of the latter, for all great autocrats first obtained the support of the popular party—Peisistratos and the other Tyrants, Cæsar, the princes of the Renaissance, Napoleon. But I have a good many objections to a monarchy, or rather, a tyranny (the word "monarchy" smacks too much of hereditary monarchy, or of that artificial hybrid "constitutional monarchy"). It is true that an unexpected intellectual life often develops at the Court of a Tyrant, and a period of tyranny usually coincides with a period of great wealth and prosperity. History teaches us that after the Tyrant's death, either the empire breaks up into many parts (Alexander) or else is restored to its former constitutional and cultural position (e.g., Napoleon, Manfred in Sicily), or crumbles away altogether, decaying slowly and ignominiously under the rule of the successors of the great prince. Thus, the rule of one has very grave dangers and difficulties of which the worst, in short, is, that a tyrant must set up an hereditary dynasty (in itself a senseless institution) merely to prevent a total *débâcle* after his death. But if the sceptre is actually handed over to his descendants, then the whole idea of the hero vanishes. For the genius who can see into the farthest corner of his kingdom and overlook all things, is so unique, that it is quite unreasonable to expect successors who can do the same even for two or three generations. . . . And

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thus the empire is given over to incapable heirs ; of course, they are protected by the Army, the Nobility, and the Landowners ; for each of these owe their position to the founder of the dynasty, and must ever fear that if it is overthrown, they themselves will be destroyed. I do not agree with the objections generally raised against autocracy, that it leads to the oppression of the people. Why, it has almost become a stereotyped phrase in history to say of the rule of one powerful man : " For the rest, his administration of the country was excellent and all the people loved him." One always forgets that it is not under the *régime* of one powerful ruler, who keeps the nobles and the barons in check, that a country suffers oppression, but rather when it groans under the dominion of a number of small hereditary dynasties, which are quite out of contact with their subjects and no longer in need of their support, because they are sufficiently protected by the solid wall of Army, Nobility, and Clergy.

### DIARY

9th January, 1912.—The reason I have been neglecting my diary is because I have been working very hard at my essay *Tyranny and Democracy*,<sup>11</sup> especially the last few days before Christmas, when I wrote like mad, and yet only got as far as Alexander. That was because I had rather do part of it thoroughly than the whole superficially.



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TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

*Zehlendorf, 19th November, 1911.*— . . . Now to my remarks as to your views. First of all, you do not know me at all if you think I could deride a vision. You seem to take me for a thorough materialist, a rationalist, who does not know that all great things have been discovered by intuition which, we must all admit, comes very near to vision.

Moreover, I think it wrong to separate body and mind as you do. You do not consider body a "comrade," as you call it, but rather a means to an end, the end being the cultivation of mind. Thus, your position differs only from the ascetic's in that you have recognised that one cannot fully develop one's mind without keeping one's body in good condition,—the body, which you regard as nothing but a troublesome vehicle of the mind. If you ever came to believe that an ascetic has more vision and is in closer contact with "God" than you, you would, to be consistent, have to adopt a life removed from the world. And this logical conclusion I would consider one of the worst of errors. To understand that, we ought to go back to the first question, that is, the purpose of life. Even here our opinions differ considerably. As far as I know you, you say that it is the absorption of our mind in the Universal Mind, Nirvana ; that is, the loss of individual personality in union with God. But then I ask, why were we ever separated from the Universal Mind at all ?

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You cannot say that it was a natural process of development, because, as I understand you, you think of our re-union or non-reunion with Nirvana as a matter of compensatory justice. But, as I conceive it, justice can only be achieved by one God or World Spirit, even if it isn't a personal God. According to your theory we are placed on this earth by God as a punishment and live in that smaller prison, our body, and the larger prison, the world, in order to expiate sins of which we know nothing; and our aim should be to throw off our fetters, body, world, life, uniting ourselves with the formless, bodyless, immaterial All-one, Nirvana. When you say that the service of the Spirit implies activity, you can only be understood to mean that you hope to do good while fighting for your ideas, and then you hope to enter Nirvana as a reward. Therefore, the only meaning of Life lies in its being a preparation. At bottom it must be a great burden to you. Thus, although you yourself contradict this, your view is one which renounces life, which aims at the hereafter, and the ultimate conclusion is to cast life away from you—to commit suicide. Foreseeing this conclusion, Christianity declares suicide one of the deadly sins. (I assume Buddhism does the same. I do not know it well, but it is an Asiatic religion as well as Christianity.) To those who commit it all hopes of Paradise are denied.

Thus you stand for a view which leads to suicide—and worse.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

Do you think one can live an active life while looking forward to a dissolution of the individual self in the universal self, in the prospect of an eternal rest, a bodiless ebbing and flowing, as one's highest reward and one's greatest bliss? I do not believe it. Do you think that those men who gave us in their works and in themselves the best and greatest that was in them; those men of action who found happiness—though never content, for that they did not need—in unending struggles and terrific conflicts, in restless striving and desire, in the immortality of their name and their works (of which we will speak later), in calm peace too, in such peace as we meet with in the beauties of Nature and of Art; do you think that these Titans would have thrown away all, bent the knee and aspired to such empty abstractions? I do not think so. But these Titans are *our* ideal heroes, as Europe bears witness; they are active and constructive, not passive and submissive.

And it is this which you seem to me to overlook. The idea of Nirvana has caught hold of you and stirred you, and I will not deny that there is something in you which responds to it. But there are in every person different tendencies which may develop if they are awakened, and some surely atrophy entirely if they are not awakened by anything. And I shall never believe that yours is an entirely passive nature; but the chord in you that responds to these Indian mystical subjects is strongly

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and even exotically developed. You yourself will not doubt that you have other inherent qualities too, and the chief of these—your pride and courage—I hope to have touched.

I spoke above of something which I think you overlook, and that is, *that the ultimate end has an effect on the means*. Thus, you cannot say: "Even if I make Nirvana my ultimate aim, I can still formulate my ethical ideas about life quite independently of it." You cannot say: "I want to live a life of action because I consider it good, and the good person is absorbed in Nirvana." That is a contradiction in terms, for action can never have as its aim dissolution or quiescence; tranquility can never rest upon action. You want to solve this contradiction, for an inactive life does not suit you, and you seem to know quite definitely what comes after death. But on the attempt to find this solution you founder. Yet, if your certainty of Nirvana is greater than your will to action, and if it also affects your actions, then you stand for something worse than suicide, for you will want to rob mankind of all that is strong, courageous and noble, of all those qualities which Conflict and Life bring forth and which alone are truly creative.

There is one other objection I want to reply to before I stop. You will perhaps say that it is an unbearable feeling for you to know nothing definite of our life after death, that you need the certainty of immortality in order to be able to live at all.

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Good ! But I shall reply : There is another immortality which also justly distinguishes exceptional people, but which at the same time brings out these creative virtues of which I spoke before, and that is, the *immortality of one's name* ; to attain this seems to me an aim worthy of the greatest endeavours. Make it your aim to perpetuate your name through great deeds and a great life ; and if you do, I believe you will achieve greater things than with Nirvana as your goal.

### TO HIS FRIEND, STEFAN L.

Zehlendorf, 5th December, 1911.—I am working so hard at my essay just now, in all my leisure time, collecting material, writing, planning the whole, that I have no time for anything else. It is called *Tyranny and Democracy*—a very difficult but very important subject which keeps me constantly busy. But I will come over to you on Sunday, and reply to several things in your letters, particularly to the remark that you will be “ finished ” (! ! ! ) at twenty if you only read good things now. This would be comic if it were not tragic. Though you are quite a young man (anyway you *wish* to be) must you economise your enthusiasm already ? Are you so blunted that a book can only impress you when you read it for the *first* time, when the excitement is still fresh ? Or so wise, that you can get everything out of it the first time ? You can read *Faust* hundreds of times, and think it each time more wonderful,

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because you will always discover something new in it, it will always call forth new responses in you ; it is absurd to say you will ever have done with it.

### DIARY

29th January, 1912.—In the evening I looked over an exceptionally interesting book on the Labour Question. The title is rather bombastic, for the pamphlet is only concerned with the results of a *questionnaire* sent to some thousands of metal workers, coal miners and spinners. But this *questionnaire* is concerned with the relation of the worker to machinery, with what worries him most in life, what he hopes for most, what he thinks about at his work, whether it gives him any pleasure, whether he goes out into the fresh air often, and so on. The stoical brevity of some replies staggers one—and what a light they throw ! They excite worthier emotions than pity, for it is not the misery and desolation of one man that speaks out of them, but the fate of millions, which glows first as a sombre torch, then burns as a sacred, shining flame, such as once burned to render homage to the rising light of the solstice ; only to render homage, for ugliness cannot rise anew in greater beauty as the Phoenix can. Literally, I mean ; these men who suffered this oppression can destroy the old, but they cannot build the new ; that must be accomplished by their less suffering comrades and their sons.

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### DIARY

*February, 1912.*—One of the worst vices of our age is that we are never at rest, we want to be present at everything, we are anxious when we miss anything, in short, we do not carry balance and poise in ourselves nor breast the current of life with complete self-assurance. Men are more varied in their interests without being more self-contained. We have lost the art of solitude which is so necessary to true inspiration. And as I am firmly convinced that the only way of correcting one's own faults is to recognise them and keep them constantly in mind, I will not hide from myself that I have been bitten by this evil too. Therefore, I shall put at the beginning of this volume the bold and defiant phrase: "Be sufficient unto thyself!"

### DIARY

*2nd March, 1912.*—I have found out, to my great regret, that I cannot keep to my work properly. I sometimes steal a few hours, but these continual diversions keep me from getting my ideas into shape, and even from thinking them out properly. . . . I do not know what to make of it. At first, of course, I was annoyed, but then I thought that it may be quite good at my age to be forced not to turn out too much, but to absorb instead, so that one can accumulate a store of energy. I am not sure that this is right; at first it was only said as a consolation

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but now it seems to me fairly convincing. At any rate I am longing for the holidays, when I can at least get something done. Of course, the things that interrupt me give me great pleasure too. To-day I read eight pages of Homer. How divinely beautiful is that Sixth Song. It shines like white-armed Nausicaa in Ulysses' wonderful Introduction. Then Plato.

### DIARY

12th April, 1912.—I read the last few chapters of the *Apology* over again . . . and discovered one sentence from which I begin to see that the death of Socrates may, after all, be justified. For he says *καὶ ὑπὸ ταύτης τῆς ἀσχολίας οὔτε τι τῶν τῆς πόλεως πράξαι μοι σχολὴ γέγονεν ἄξιον λόγου οὔτε τῶν οἰκείων*. The purport of which is that in carrying out his occupation of teaching men he had no leisure to bother about the State. And, of course, it must have a disintegrating effect if some one intentionally excludes himself from the life of the Polity. One is left wondering whether in some greater age the State would not have turned his work to purpose politically, or whether it would not have become so of its own accord; for in an ideal community *every* activity should stand in close relation to the State itself.

### DIARY

4th May, 1912.—To do anything as a reaction only is a sure sign of weakness. If only I could keep



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always before me the motto put at the beginning of this book ; to attain a certain poise and balance within myself ! But it is very difficult to absorb essential influences and yet use them only as a means to an end, *i.e.*, to mould oneself from within, and not to accumulate foreign substances, however enthusiastically received. One must be very firm to allow these impressions, which are quite necessary to *constructive* work, to have only so much influence as can be fully absorbed and digested ; not to be led astray by glittering colours. Will such strength be given me ?

### DIARY

28rd May, 1912.—It is true Taine <sup>14</sup> has a brilliant style, but, after all, it is nothing more than a superior kind of journalism. When, after him, you read Napoleon's weighty, glowing sentences, everything else vanishes in a mist of fine phrases and "cleverness." I suppose there is no better school of experience than to feel the breath of the Titans and view their deeds with their own eyes. And Napoleon more than any other expressed wonderful thoughts with such amazing felicity, and in apparently effortless phrases or short aphorisms. I have already learnt an enormous amount from him (about the State, for instance), and can yet learn a great deal more.

### DIARY

28th May, 1912. In the afternoon Homer. Finished the magnificent *Twelfth Book*. What

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wonderful buoyancy, what joy in the sunshine, in all sensuous beauty, is expressed in it, and, at the same time, what deep tragedy ! It is the glowing embodiment of the Western, of the Hellenic-European spirit, and that's why I love and admire it more than words can tell.

### DIARY

28th July, 1912.—I am now reading slowly but with great enjoyment the *Vita Nuova*.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Trouville, 30th July, 1912.*—I have just read an article by Ministerial Director Dr. Freund, in the *Woche* (No. 80, 27/7/1912), about the significance of mixed public and private enterprise for the housing question, which I thought very interesting. You certainly ought to get some one to write about it, either Fuchs, in connection with the housing question, as in this article ; or Kuczynski, or best of all, Eberstadt, as Freund is carrying on a controversy with him ; perhaps Freund himself ; or just a general article about this new form of organisation. I think that a coupling of such opposed interests as those of State and private enterprise is sure to ruin it, but according to the revisionist point of view it is a development towards socialism. It is clear for many reasons that nationalisation will be achieved much more easily and successfully in some such way, because in the bitter struggle that will inevitably

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come between the two parties, it is obvious that the State must in the end be victorious; otherwise a terrific clamour would arise, because the private entrepreneur, armed with even better weapons than he has now, would be able to tyrannise over the consumer more effectively than ever by means of trusts and combines. This whole question is very important, and therefore I think the article had better be assigned to a social democrat, say, Lindemann. I hope this long discussion has not bored you and that there will be a more sensible one in the *Annals*,<sup>22</sup> to the next issue of which I am looking forward with pleasure.

### DIARY

30th July, 1912.—The more I think of it the more I am persuaded that there exists an inevitable and necessary fate, which does not weigh the good and evil of any action, but lets every cause be followed by its natural effects without taking motives into account in the slightest degree. I have not quite grasped it yet, but I feel that is how life works out, and so the greatest men, who have the greatest joys, must also bear the greatest sorrows, without "sinning" in the very shallow and popular Christian meaning of that word; this idea of fate was still held in Greece (Œdipus). Tragic, it is indeed, but not depressing, for suffering is a school for the great, in every respect a necessary element in their lives; this resolves itself

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into a beautiful *Amor fati*, and one can now interpret in two ways that glorious Goethe quotation :

“ Into their darling’s lap, the high Gods still let fall  
Life’s fruitage, infinite joys and infinite sorrows, all.”

### DIARY

*Paris, 14th August, 1912.*—Afterwards Mummy and I drove to the Invalides. We entered from the wrong side, and came first into the actual church with all the torn flags, and from there into the little ante-room which contains all the memorials of Napoleon’s death and the death-mask taken by Antomarchi. Rarely have I seen anything so magnificent ! The open mouth, animated and somewhat contemptuous, the superb purity and regularity of the features form a picture of imposing, almost classical beauty. There is dignity and majesty in them, and above all an infinite superiority over all triviality.

### DIARY

*3rd September, 1912. (Home again.)*—I am reading Homer assiduously, and am looking forward to work again very much. I think I will leave the State alone for a time and let my ideas on it mature without being disturbed by too much reading ; which is not only a good thing in itself, but is also made necessary by my numerous and highly interesting lessons. I will choose the poets for my own reading,

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especially those that have a bearing on my lessons. I am not really giving up anything in so doing, but am saving and economising my energies, whilst at the same time I am learning a great deal in other directions that interests me very much. Besides, it is pretty clear that things evolve much more readily in the unconscious than when one worries about them for years in clear daylight, often in a state of fatigue or boredom and suffering from an excess of material.

### DIARY

*Obergrainau, 5th September, 1912.*—After dinner went for a glorious walk over the highest fields of the Waxenstein. It had rained hard, and the great, wide, smoothly-mown green meadows, now softly undulating, now rising almost to little hills, spread a wonderful feeling of peace and beauty. You cannot imagine a more splendid source of security and cleanness of mind and soul than a complete abandonment to Nature when the air is clear and fragrant with the scent of rain; it always gives me an indefinable feeling of joy and freedom that makes me want to tear madly down the fields shouting aloud for joy. I wanted to do some more Homer, but I could not stand it, I climbed up the meadows again and sat down on the grass at the top to watch the sunset over the now almost cloudless valley.

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### DIARY

*Munich, 8th September, 1912.*—In the morning to the Glyptothek. That was the best thing in Munich. That heavenly Torso of the kneeling boy, the wonderfully austere beauty of the Head of Ares, the incomparable Medusa Rondanini, the Barberini Faun with its somewhat later and, therefore, cruder strength, subdued by sleep. It reminds me of one of the best chapters in *Zarathustra*: "Thus should the hero rest, with his arm flung over his head, and thus should he conquer even his sleep." This quotation may not be very suitable. There is something brutal, something excessive in it, and you can feel there the barbarity which exists at the end as at the beginning of every great civilisation; but at the same time it has a trace of the heroic. Though we have here complete mastery of execution and fully-trained skill, we yet sorely miss the great beauty, nobility and sublime calm of a Phidias, the youthful joy and piety (in its best sense, perhaps one had better say, awe) and inspiration of the Parthenon figures. But I turn to the most exquisite of all the marvels in the Glyptothek, the bronze head of a boy.<sup>16</sup> There stands Hellas, entire, revealed to our astonished gaze, so incomparable, sublime, and at the same time so deeply tragic—as all great things are tragic, and so joyous as all great things are joyous: and so near do we get to it that it goes through our very frame like a shudder. Why can we not hold it,

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why can we not grasp it, seeing that it offers itself to us ? And all the other ages vanish in the mist, when Hellas arises like the splendour of sunrise. I could really worship this heavenly head.

*Motto of the 16th Book [of the Diary.] (September, 1912) :*

I believe,  
As steadfastly as any devotee :  
In my familiar spirit,  
In my duty  
And in my task appointed.

### DIARY

14th September, 1912.—I was thinking a lot about art, about the Classic and its two starting-points and opposites in modern art, van Gogh and Marées. Both of them had realised a fact which lifted them infinitely above any other contemporary artists, the fact that, as Meyer-Gräfe says, in an inadequate but suggestive phrase, " nothing leads so much to the decay of art as the lack of a central purpose." The word " purpose " is not quite right, for it tempts one to think of the " utilitarian," but the meaning I fully endorse. And it is the only possibility of achieving a new and great style in art while avoiding the pitfalls of classicism. For it was there the culture of the " Empire " period went to pieces ; it did not possess that innate power of the people, once possessed by Italy, of absorbing the tremendous forces of the Ancient World and of completely re-

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moulding them to produce something in its very essence self-created. And everything depends now on whether the Germans will be strong and young enough to produce a new culture and a new art on the lines foreshadowed by Goethe, or whether it will remain stuck ignominiously in the mire, encumbered by all sorts of minor issues and weaknesses.

I finished the *First Elegy* in the first book of Tibullus which I think fascinating. There is a limpid and tranquil beauty in it, a great wealth of imagery and sound, and wonderfully tender and yet living intuition.

### DIARY

29th October, 1912.—I think the only way of averting the terrible danger of war which broods over us is for Austria to abandon the enclave which separates Serbia and Montenegro (Bosnia). But will Russia leave Constantinople (Byzantium!) to the Bulgarians—if she conquers it? What position will Rumania take up? What will become of Pan-Slavism?

All these infinitely difficult questions contain so many germs of war, that I see no one man who could repress them. Perhaps only a woman can do that—Fear.

### TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

12th November, 1912.—I am much too fond of Hellas, of the limpid clarity of the Greek spirit—so



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distinct from the rationalist aridity of the material world. I am much too fond of life and conflict, of the glory of the human body, of fighting, emotional peoples and philosophers like the Greeks and Nietzsche, to follow such a vague and unsubstantial anti-vital philosophy or religion, as that of Chuang-Tse. And, further, I do not believe that such a doctrine could ever take firm root in a strong, living Europe; if it did, the downfall of Europe would be at hand.

### DIARY

*28th December, 1912.*—In the Kaiser Friedrich Museum I grew ever more in love with the bright, clear Italians; even my enthusiasm for Rembrandt pales in comparison. These pictures give one such a keen appreciation of the restraint of strong colours and strong lines, of their economy of effort and their perfect proportion, that the almost chaotic mingling and intermingling of light and shade in Rembrandt's world does not give me anything like the same happiness or the same tonic strength.

### DIARY

*11th January, 1913.*—I am enraptured and in ecstasies over Herodotus. What is so wonderful about him is the objective way in which he narrates things, exactly as if he were reporting them; he simply states the facts that his keen intelligent

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observation noted, without himself seeming to have an opinion—or at least, without constantly obtruding one on us. He absorbs every event with his acutely observant eye and his sensitive ear, and writes it down with complete directness. But sometimes—very rarely—when he is saturated by all this vivid colouring and these sharply defined images (in van Gogh we find again this combination, present in Greek art, but now never met with), the wonderful outer shell is smashed and there is revealed to us such bewitching fruit, as that unforgettably glorious passage in Chapter 78, with its immortal utterances on Democracy. It is here that we see what is most characteristic in the extraordinary influence exerted by this man; he is no solid architect like Livy, or like Thucydides and the great Roman historians, yet he gains mastery over his subject-matter in another way, and the highest point of his art seems to consist in giving the impression of being completely mastered by his subject. To him the world is new, it seems to have just risen in all its purity, as Aphrodite from the foam-flecked wave, and so he has not the power to mould and shape it as later writers; yet this seeming weakness turns out to be his greatest strength! For the Dionysian ecstasy which takes hold of him in contemplation of this newly-created world, and which results in the Apolline clarity of his writings, produces greater works than those resulting from the careful sounding of a later and more critical period.

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It is just this wondering, and yet perfectly natural, abandonment to events which brings out their tremendous dignity. We are here face to face with the highest form of creative art, showing complete respect for its subject, and yet despite, or probably because of it, and because it is directed by a strong mind, producing the most powerful effects. You may say that one must not judge the whole from a part of the work. But even if one admits this, it is yet true that a whole sphere can be constructed from the smallest segment. And great organisms always approximate most closely in their essence to the perfect sphere.

### DIARY

16th January, 1918.—Midway between Cézanne's *Dance of Love* and a Monticelli there hung an old Italian portrait of a man, of compelling power and grandeur. It was so out of character in the super-modern room of this exhibition that I was quite taken aback. Its wonderful unruffled serenity, in colour, too, was a triumph over the chaos of modern attempts, but, after all, the world was created out of Chaos.

Afterwards I read the charming third *Sulpitia Elegy* (to Apollo). I do not think Tibullus is the author of these songs. They are written in a different style from his own poems, which are much softer and more melodious.

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### DIARY

17th January, 1918.—In the evening I was at last able to get back to Napoleon's proclamations. I looked once more at those incomparable ones, issued during his first Italian campaign, that really contain the free, vigorous breath of democracy as it existed at the beginning of the Persian wars. The French language on his tongue sometimes turns into another, but not less beautiful Latin.

### DIARY

20th January, 1918.—Virgil. I am out of sympathy with his whole art, because I like Homer, who is his complete opposite. Homer writes out of the fulness of life, he has no empty phrases or banalities. How true to life, how vivid and real, are the *Land of the Phœnicians* and *The Storm*. The man who wrote those knows the sea and knows man, he has watched the flight of birds and moving animals, he has gazed at flowers and has known the sword and wounds of battle. All he creates is born from within and his pathos reaches great depths because it is true—true in the highest sense of the word, artistically experienced, and actually observed. How different is Virgil! Even if I did not know that he had never left *terra firma*, his mere description of the storm would tell me. It is only the noise that attracts him; it is true that he sometimes produces fine sounding passages but, of course, a style that is

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always clear and vigorous can only grow out of a clear and vigorous mind.

### DIARY

*26th January, 1918.*—I read two pamphlets on the alcohol question in the forenoon, Gruber and Kræpelin, and then Forel. They convinced me that a physically degenerate age such as ours puts heavier duties on one than any other; the purely social side of the question forces one to become an abstainer, because you only live the smallest part of your life for yourself. If this were otherwise, or if we lived in healthy times, I am sure I should drink, for all great men and all great ages did so, and all great poets have sung of its glories.

### DIARY

*1st February, 1918.*—In the morning I read an article of Maeterlinck's in the *Neue Rundschau*, on psychical research and the phenomena connected with it. I learned one thing from it; it is a subject that I may not take up. I have a strong sense of duty and I know that neither am I now, nor shall I ever be, entitled to do just what I like or what pleases me. I do not know whether other people feel the same, but there is no doubt about it for me. And there is no doubt in my mind that I am watched over by a *Daimon*, as powerful as Socrates'—an infallible star which, while it leaves me undisputed responsibility in the choice of things, guides me in

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everything which does not depend on my personal decision ; and which, above all, enables me to make up my own mind. I do not know whither I am going, but I do know that if I keep in mind what I have just said, I shall certainly go in the right direction.

I have often wondered whether I may really write poetry or not. But firstly, poetry enables one to develop and give expression to certain forms of mental energy, like that revealed to me in such wonderful fashion by the world of Hellas ; and secondly, I cannot even see beyond the very next bend in the road ; there are so many distant paths above me in the mountains and in the woods and down below in the valleys, and I have no idea which will be mine. But I feel quite definitely that the first law of my life, which I may not break under the terrible penalty of many wasted years, is to keep away from the glittering, infinitely seductive sphinx-guarded portals of mysticism. My will is concentrated on the things of this earth, this body, and this life, and my immortality is in my work and in my name. The feeling that shows me my place in the deep and infinite unity of the whole world is beyond words, but it is real, this world in which I am given a holy mission, a guiding mind ; the glorious knowledge of it pervades my whole being.

### DIARY

*23rd February, 1918.*—Early on a very beautiful morning I went with Mister <sup>17</sup> into the woods ; the

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only poetic expression I could find for it was my poem, *Morning in February*.<sup>28</sup> There was a cold tang in the air which froze everything and which pleased me very much. Somehow I felt oppressed by a vague melancholy, but the Olympian magic of the rising day soon conquered it. However, I went home soon. I felt a growing and rather inexplicable dejection and then a distinct uneasiness spread over me. This is nothing new of late, and, as usual, I tried to scare it away by dreams. . . . But life will not be lulled and crooned to sleep by dreams, without taking its revenge. And I do not think that Hippolyta<sup>29</sup> as a creature of fancy can last much longer; I am very bent on realities and life now. Perhaps my writing poetry is a result of this dreaming and yearning (which yet is sometimes very beautiful) and perhaps it will end when I take hold of life; although I do not think so for, after all, I am very unsentimental and detached. But if the worst comes to the worst, what has it all to do with me? I know that I am a long way yet from abandoning these elusive day-dreams and facing the realities of slowly-evolving life.

### DIARY

3rd March, 1918.—In the morning I was frightfully slack, headachy, giddy. . . . I started the *Second Elegy* of Tibullus, and read Herodotus at my leisure. I am taking notes of him with ever-growing enthusiasm. I am getting very excited about

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political problems again, especially the relation of Church and State, and most of all about Religion itself.

### DIARY

*12th March, 1918.*—Went for a walk with Mister. Wrote a very prosaic poem, but the subject-matter is of importance to me.

“ Above the landscape's waves, that ebb  
Softly toward the vale, there stands  
In the firm outlines traced by will creative  
The palace. Thus amid the sway  
And flux of Nature, Life renews itself.  
But human work, constructive, stone on stone  
Forms its achievements in an ordered plan.”

Then I sat on a tree trunk and read Wölfflin<sup>30</sup> with much enjoyment. His description of the Cinquecento is extraordinarily good. He loves it, and love penetrates to the very depths of human feeling, being in its nature akin to eternal and all-seeing wisdom. Hate, on the other hand, which shows in his treatment of the early Renaissance period, is clever and sharp-eyed, and treads near to things like a short-sighted man, and sees only details. Wölfflin seems to have overlooked the fact that there was only an early Renaissance culture, not a later one. True, he remarks on p. 282: “The later Renaissance stands on a narrow foundation, and there was a clear danger that it would end in



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nothing," but he does not draw quite the right conclusions from this. This complete human spiral in evolution, this separation of individuals from the community, was anything rather than a return to Antiquity. They certainly did not gaze into the eyes of the classic world, but at most heard the Latin rhetoric of a Virgil. And it must not be forgotten that hardly a single Greek original, hardly one Roman copy from *early* times, was either known or appreciated. Then this thoroughly rhetorical culture had to pour itself out into the turgid and shallow waters of the Baroque and the Counter-reformation. And sometimes I get an impression of superficiality even in the works of the Classical period.

When Wölfflin talks of the early Renaissance, he nearly always means Filippino, Botticelli, or even Ghirlandajo, who is without doubt a second-rate artist. He overlooks the sublime dignity and calm, the love of life and the vital strength of the early Quattrocento. But these are small objections, which cannot detract from a work which, of all those that I know, most helped to develop my artistic appreciation. Wölfflin, without doubt, loves classic art, and that alone, and therefore one should be guided by him only in that.

TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

*Zehlendorf, 22nd March, 1918.*—Latterly I have been fairly occupied with the Renaissance, particularly with its architecture, which ought to interest

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you on account of its mathematical laws. When you are lost in the contemplation of the glories of a wall, with symmetrical incisions, of a well-proportioned window, unsuspected and undreamt of beauties emerge. I think too, that architecture is by rights a masculine art and that its decline in our age (which indeed shows signs of changing for the better) shows how effeminate we are becoming. And another thing I think very important is the relation between logic in mathematics and logic in architecture. . . . In any case there is a living logic, which is expressed in the Latin or Greek languages, in an ancient temple, a Renaissance structure, a drama of Shakespeare's or a poem of Goethe's; that is to say, which consists in the beautiful proportions, the balance and poise and the form of these things. I am convinced that it would be exceptionally fruitful and stimulating to enquire further into the general relations between ideas and their embodiment, to compare the abstract and the concrete, that which has grown with that which was consciously made. (Here we would be brought face to face again with the extraordinary differences between language as one of the ever-changing products of nature and the other things that I have been speaking of—creations of art.)

### DIARY

*4th April, 1918.*—Ran through the woods for almost three hours alone with Mister. He understands me very well, and becomes quite Bacchanalian

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on these occasions, strange as it may sound. There is a wonderful joy in observing plants and animals down to the tiniest detail, in seeing with one's own eyes how a rabbit runs, how a stag jumps ; in short, in looking directly at Nature ; for the immediate awareness and intuition of things is the first step towards creation.

### DIARY

*Florence, 27th April, 1918.*—Got up before six o'clock. I had left the shutters open and the light woke me even earlier. I went to St. Croce through the shuttered, empty streets and stayed half an hour in the chapel with the painting of John the Baptist. The arrangement of the picture, representing the ascent of John to Heaven, is wonderful, because it is so completely penetrated with its meaning. The way the disciples are partly flung upwards, partly hurled down is deeply affecting ; and Giotto's whole strength is shown in the artistic way in which he makes this subject a picture of the most profound and persuasive harmony. The greatest exponents of mediæval culture have indeed turned into the mighty founders of the modern world : Frederick II., Dante, Giotto !

### DIARY

*Florence, 6th May, 1918.*—I think a Titan found a home in Michelangelo's bosom, but in Leonardo's a god !

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It would be stupid for us to go to Venice for three days. Everything would be in such disorder and confusion in my mind that I would get no pleasure from it. I am full of so many marvellous things, so intoxicated, and I have got so much material to dream of and think about that a strange world and a new culture like that of Venice would bewilder me utterly, and would thrust my struggling ideas back into confusion.

### DIARY

*Florence, 14th May, 1918.*—I often ask myself: why is it that the last word of the Renaissance in poetry, philosophy and state-craft is left unsaid (Dante comes before this time) and why, too, did the majestic grandeur of the early Quattrocento develop so quickly into the somewhat amateurish, weary and almost decadent charm of the later? And why, in short, was not the world blessed with a second fifth century after these wonderful beginnings which were certainly worthy of Hellas? I think the answer is: it lacked the vehement emotion, the tremendous inspiration which was given to Greece by its religion (and more especially by the recently developed Demeter and Dionysian cults) on the one hand and the Persian wars on the other. Thus there were lacking both a religious and a nationalist impulse. The Italians wasted their political gifts in endless party struggles, in which only the individual was involved, and their religion wavered to and fro

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between paganism and Christian ecstasy, with all their obscure, intermediate forms. I do not deny for a moment that the men of the Renaissance had faith, often even a strong faith, but the passionate fervour was wanting, the freshness and impetuosity that even another St. Francis could not have brought them—for he was essentially mediæval. It was their tragic error to choose humanism as a substitute; for religion, being the highest good of a people, can have no substitute. The fact that all this urgent searching found its way back into Christianity, breaking out impetuously in the hysterical frenzy of a Savonarola, and then condemned to decay and to become silted up in the dull stagnation of the Counter-Reformation, is the saddest illustration of my theory; that precisely what this age lacked was a great religious or political revival.

Then in the glowing sun I marvelled at the pure and charming proportions of St. Spirito, and rejoiced in the warm air breathing happiness.

### DIARY

*Florence, 16th May, 1918.*—In the forenoon to St. Croce, the Pazzi Chapel, charming and delightful as ever. I admire and like Brunelleschi's genius more and more, and I am always trying by means of fresh examples—as opposed to Wölfflin—to get a definite idea of the fundamental difference between the two periods of the Quattrocento.

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### DIARY

*Florence, 17th May, 1918.*—In the morning, Casa Buonarrotti. Beautiful sketches, especially one of a virago-like Madonna suckling her child. Midday to Fiesole. It was a heavenly day. After dinner went up into the vine-clad hills and lay down naked in the sun. I have rarely had such a feeling of happiness, of bliss. All the Olympians descended, Aphrodite in the van; in spite of that, nay, because of it, it makes one feel marvellously clean and full of joy and beauty.

### DIARY

*Tuscany, 19th May, 1918.*—Travelled through this magnificent country, through fertile districts with beautiful ridges of hills and castles, to Arezzo. The columned portico of the Church St. Maria della Grazia is the most delightful of its kind. There appears before us an incredibly ethereal hall of the Graces looking as if it were built by angels in their play; even pouring rain cannot impair the effect it produces. Charming and gracious as it is it must be admitted that in structure it has been copied from wooden buildings, which is, in principle, at any rate, a doubtful proceeding.

Back to St. Francesco. You had to work your way through a number of interesting frescoes in the hall-like Church before you got to the Choir, to Piero della

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*Francesca's History of the Cross.* The great objectivity and grandeur of these frescoes made on me a stronger impression than any other Renaissance work of art. There is in them a nobility and dignity of conception, a feeling for classical beauty in the faces, in the fall of the folds, in every simple line of the neck and hands, that is unique in the whole of the Quattrocento; it returns less purely in the Cinquecento and in intensity can really only be compared to Giotto. Both composition and sense of colour are astoundingly well-developed in Piero. How beautiful is the picture of Maxentius and Constantine; how excellent, too, the horse of the rival emperor, endeavouring to make its way out of the trench. Constantine is stretching out his pale narrow hand so that the cross he holds seems almost in its softly glowing simplicity to become the focus of all the lines, for Maxentius turns anxiously towards it while his horse clammers out of the ditch in the opposite direction; Constantine is gazing calmly at the sacred symbol. And the rampart of lances behind the Emperor, which gives him tremendous mastery and power over the isolated figure of Maxentius, can only be compared in its bold and skilful disorder to Velasquez' *Surrender of Breda*, and perhaps to *The Battle of Alexander*. How much I could say about the other pictures, which are really the best, the *Queen of Sheba* and the *Empress Helena*, the *Dream of the Emperor*, or the so-called *Annunciation*!

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### DIARY

*Florence, 20th May, 1918.*—Went to the Bargello. I was upstairs only, chiefly with Donatello and the medallions. This is one of the best places to get to know the men of the Renaissance. What a difference there is between the noble and delicate head of Vittorino da Feltre and the vain savant's physiognomy of fat Guarrino—between the spiritual L. B. Alberti and the clever, obstinate, though impressive peasant head of the merchant Cosimo Medici, who combined great culture with originality; he is one of my favourite figures. How significant on the other hand is Lionello d'Este, weary and decadent, and the imperious but admirable Sigismondo Malatesta, delightful Strozzi and elegant Tronabuoni, and then Polizian and the beautiful boy's head of Pico della Mirandola! What a circle!

### DIARY

*Florence, 21st May, 1918.*—In the archæological museum, looked at vases, bronzes, and cameos—that is to say, the Grecian ones only. The pottery vessels speak to me in so life-like a fashion that I people all the hills with their nymphs, satyrs and mænads.

### DIARY

*24th May, 1918. On the Journey.*—In Milan, went early to the Cathedral. There is a grandeur about its interior which purifies and ennobles. And then



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some marvellous moments in front of Leonardo's *Last Supper*.

At Basel, my first glance fell upon Pa. Most unexpected, was crazy with joy! Heavenly Rhine trip in very clear and pleasant weather through the ravishing landscapes of Alsace and the Rhine. I could not keep myself from feeling glad and proud that they were German. Passing through the numerous tunnels and at the beginning and the end of the trip I read the Introduction to Decembrio's *Visconti and Sforza*. It is very interesting, and again I was impressed by the mysterious way in which Fate hindered the unification of Italy. On p. 86 the author emphasises another significant fact, namely, that the national outlook and political aims of the Tyrants contrasted favourably with Republican pettiness. In this lack of feeling of common citizenship, and in the predominance of the unrestrained individual, there seems to me to lie one of the chief contrasts to ancient Greece. The closest resemblance to them can be found in the conditions in Magna Greece, and those wildly adventurous campaigns in Sicily and Calabria remind one of many a raid by Piccinino or Francesco Sforza. Visconti himself makes me feel that he had anticipated, if not invented, all the diplomacy of later times as well as the whole modern method of government. It is a splendid biography and gives the highest proof of the Italian's gifts of observation and exposition. The way in which Decembrio describes every gesture,

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and reveals the minutest stirrings of the soul without making them seem trivial, is one of the greatest manifestations of that objectivity of observation, characteristic of the Ancients, which is to be found in the men of the Renaissance. Visconti shows himself to be an enigmatic ruler whose powers of organisation and whole method of government suggest the East through the Emperor Frederick II. on the one hand, and the Modern World through King Frederick II. on the other. Very remarkable!

How beautiful are Bingen and the Lorelei!

### DIARY

*Bonn, 26th May, 1918.*—Finished Visconti in the morning and started Sforza. This is much weaker, although one can sometimes hear in his writing the beating of the war-frenzied pulse of these agitated times.

### DIARY

*1st June, 1918.*—To Cologne. Dull weather. Went to the Museum. There are some wonderful pictures among the moderns. The one of van Gogh's which struck me particularly, beside the portrait of a young man on a green background and the Arlésienne, was the bridge with its classical precision of design. You can distinctly follow the tragic but highly interesting drama in a series of later works, see how the marvellous clarity and hardness began to dissolve in waves, how it gradually grew into

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music—and in the end melted away in the surging chaos of madness.

### DIARY

*Bonn, 2nd June, 1918.*—I felt a clear, exulting and mad joy, which slowly changed to happy contentment. There are quite a number of experiences which have a like effect. When several of these coincide, they bring about the greatest joy that one can possibly experience. If, in the midst of beautiful country, you bathe your naked body in the sunlight, thinking of a lovely girl, of radiant people dancing in green meadows enclosed by woods, and of Bacchic games; perhaps writing a verse now and again, and then sinking into a light sleep, overcome by pleasant sensations and beauty. Only a few of these joys are sufficient, too. Is not the mere sight of a great work of art, of a well-proportioned house, the fleeting glimpse of a charming child, the listening to a poem, the hot sun in the streets, or a new and inspiring idea, sufficient to drive away all bad thoughts and make your whole being good and beautiful! But, on the other hand, evil influences exercised by ugly things are to be deprecated. He has a weak will and character who grows angry or ill-tempered, stupid or discontented, because of dull weather or because he meets antipathetic people, if he has to wander for long in joyless streets, see ugly pictures or read worthless books. Such a man is still so unbalanced that he gives way at every shock. Of

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course, some highly gifted persons (not geniuses!) have remained permanently at this stage. *My aim must be to react with the utmost sensitiveness to beauty, but to let ugliness run off me like water off a duck's back.*

### DIARY

Bonn, 4th June, 1918.—I slept lightly and was wrapped in fleeting dreams and pleasant visions; they strengthened me wonderfully. With eyes shut, I thought I felt the room full of genii and gods, in whose midst a charming little Eros flew back and forth till suddenly Apollo stood by my bedside and laid his healing hand upon my throat.<sup>21</sup> I am sure that to-day I did get very much better, and it made me wonder whether the gods are not symbols of our will altogether, representing a sudden eruption of *élan vital* into the material world, making thought, to a certain extent, the force that determines the form of things. But, undoubtedly, there must be some kind of Absolute. . . . It is strange that, however much I fought against it, I have yet felt and discerned one peculiarity of Greek thought. Is it not conceivable that it is precisely in regard to the knowledge of the highest things in life that the thought of the Greeks, admittedly up till now the greatest people, has been the most profound? . At any rate, this direct experience has become so indispensable to me, has grown so spontaneous, that I see only its natural spontaneity; and I perceive too

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distinctly the great gulf between it and all classicism, which, in its essence is something not vital, to have any painful feeling of being dishonest or rationalist.

### DIARY

*7th June, 1918. Home again.*—Early home. I was overjoyed, ran and romped about. Late in the evening a profound and universal prayer from my deep feeling of joy and happiness went up to Zeus.

### DIARY

*24th June, 1918.*—It was raining on and off. I went for a quick hour's walk, very excited, making up poetry all the time. Saw elves and spirits in the woods and meadows. Very happy. As usual, I wrote down only a fraction of it :

“Never hast thou hidden,  
Father, Thy face  
From us in clouds ;  
But in the raindrops  
Thou hast descended  
To refresh the Earth.  
Flow too through my  
Body that yearns !  
Saturate my  
Pores that open,  
Overflow my  
Waking thoughts.”

I was very sensible to the purifying quality of the rain, and was seized with the idea that God Himself comes down in the rain to us, fertilising the earth with his seed (like Danæe and the shower of gold).

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At any rate, this strong scent after rain has in it something of the natural, bodily union of heaven and earth, from whose embrace all life issues. And all living things have come so close to me again, have become so tangible that I sang :

“ The wood is all rustling with spirits that breathe.  
The glistening raindrops, whose freshness divine  
Fills fancy with visions that glitter and shine,  
And, in bright benediction invisible, wreath  
Brown columns and branches of sweet-smelling pine.”

I cannot express in words the amazing nearness, fragrance and richness of colour of this picture.

### DIARY

*26th June, 1913.*—Glancing over this year of my life, the second half was unusually beautiful. The gradual development in me of the idea of God seems particularly important. My ardour for all things grows more intense, my soul is growing stronger and purer. I have grown out of that lack of concentration which troubled me last year. So I look into the future with hopeful expectancy, and am ardently longing for its beauty and its richness.

### DIARY

*17th July, 1913.*—

“ The Star of Aphrodite burned above  
The shades—when doubts were clouding all my mind  
And ambushed like a lion watched my path—  
As glorious and invincible as Love ;  
And my fears lifted as the mists that blind,  
Splintered like twigs before a strong man's wrath.

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Then all the Host of Heaven shone around,  
But Ishtar's was the light upon my way.  
And visions shimmered on the magic ground,  
And noiseless elves danced in her potent ray.  
And in the night I raised glad hands of prayer  
To the Great Goddess of the Evening Star,  
Who had revived and healed me from despair  
With her sweet smile of favour from afar."

This poem, which is a miserable effort, describes my mood much better than anything else could, and that alone shows its essentially inartistic nature. It is an "opportunistic" poem, not objectively seen; it has not got beyond the subjective. Now it is obvious that the more important the personal element, the more difficult it is to overcome it, but just as finer sculptures can be hewn out of marble than out of soft terra cotta, so the greatest works of art are produced from the deepest emotional disturbances, if only one can succeed in raising these personal experiences to the level of symbol and type.

### DIARY

*19th July, 1918.*—In the morning I went for a walk in pouring rain. The woods were empty, everything was as fresh as though covered with dew. Thick red grass under the bronze branches, then again a meadow of tenderest green with the intense yellow of plaster-clover between, which smells so gloriously of honey.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

27th July, 1918.—To the Landgraf in thick fog. It was nearly 8 a.m. and was beginning to grow light ; then came that queer disturbing morning wind, at first gentle, then blowing stronger. A trembling burst forth from the innermost recesses of the trees, a whispering of dryads and elves, longing for the day to come, and then dew fell, a wonderful early greeting of the light, which quite captivated us. "The day before us and the night behind!!" At back of us lay a horrible, leaden-grey gloom, depressing, sombre and encervating. But in front of us, towards the east, the clouds glowed luminous like crystal, translucent as alabaster, and suffused with a wonderful play of bright and rosy colours.

### DIARY

2nd August, 1918.—Read Lipiner's *Hippolytos*. It is probably very significant, but I do not quite understand it yet, chiefly on account of the free rhythms. Although it is often beautiful in detail, I do not think it is permissible to write a whole drama in this measure. It renders its form and substance vague and confused.

### TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

28th August, 1918.—Two emotional experiences have taken great hold of me lately : Religion and Eros. My belief, strengthened by the *Symposium*,



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which, indeed, is one of the most sublime creations on earth, but mostly guided by my own experiences, is that they are intimately connected, are perhaps even different expressions of the same desire, or divergent developments of the same tendency. I see it much too vividly and definitely to doubt that I am right, though, of course, I am not yet in a position to form a clear conception of it or to give reasons for it.

### DIARY

*2nd November, 1913.*—In the morning I ran out and wrote the *Pan-Scene*<sup>21</sup> up to the description of Eros, in all sorts of settings, among willows, firs and oaks. Worked at it throughout the day. I am so happy ! It is strange that I cannot write a single line of poetry at a desk. Perhaps more easily in bed at night, or if they are prayers, walking about my room.

### DIARY

*Bremen,*<sup>22</sup> *9th November, 1913.*—Rushed at a mad pace through the Bürgerpark, and conceived this poem :

“ Now doth again the coolness of rain-sweetened  
breezes embrace me,  
And the clear voice of the birds mid the breath of  
beneficent trees  
Purges my soul. Oh, silvery scent of the tremulous  
ether !  
How my lips thirst and absorb deep that pure liquid  
life.

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Now Zeus disperses the clouds. Oh, shine forth, ye  
Heavens !  
Azure celestial unfolds distances pearly and warm,  
Sorrow and heaviness leave me, the blood-scarlet  
leaves glow inviting.  
Kisses ecstatic, and Nature thrills, for the high Gods  
are near."

### DIARY

*17th December, 1918. Home again.*—Went for a long walk in the afternoon and revised the scene once more. Suddenly the idea of Euphrosyne occurred to me, and carried away by the impulse, I went home and wrote the whole scene straight off. Very happy.

### DIARY

*1st January, 1914.*—In the morning sped away on soundless ski for two and a half hours over the cold, bright landscape. The infinite silence of the white woods is almost oppressive; it is so imposing, but it is quite intoxicating. In the afternoon went again. The snow blew, like vapour from the nostrils of a horse, and drifted to and fro, now veiling the landscape, now clearing away to leave a wide view of the burning sky and the black pines, standing on their white mound like dumb lance-bearers before their Lord.

Looked at the book dealing with the nude. The Egyptians are stranger and, therefore, more astonishing in their undisturbed majesty, but the Greeks

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always remain the greatest people. Their statues are gods and full-blooded men, and yet are not at all imitative. Egyptian works, on the other hand, strike one as mighty colossi which, by some strange chance, have been forced into human form.

### DIARY

1st February, 1914.—Filled with beautiful thoughts I went home under a glorious starry sky, in which the mighty hieroglyphic, Orion, spread out before me. Mars is in the Gemini, Saturn in the Bull, Venus is hidden from view in the Archer. I do not know the meaning of this, but I am quite certain of what I have got to do.

### DIARY

2nd February, 1914.—The *Iliad*. Its atmosphere is quite different from that of the *Odyssey*; they resemble each other, "Sisters indeed, but different each from other." In the former everything seems more threatening, wilder, more undisciplined, Æolian; the latter is more measured, it is almost dainty, in short, Ionic. How unlike too is the intervention of the gods. In the *Odyssey* the real part is played by Mentor-Athene (Hauptmann made use of this for his Leukone), while in the *Iliad* the gods participate so vividly (*ἐναργής*) that one is amazed at the sensuous power of this mythical poem, which is held together in beautiful restraint by an

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

incredible, almost courtly, culture and technique, and thus attains the level of a work of art.

### DIARY

22nd February, 1914.—Read *Sappho*. Most intoxicating. What fire and beauty !

### DIARY

1st March, 1914.—The loveliest day you could imagine. The blue of the sky fairy-like. A wonderful Aphrodite-experience of rare power.

“Lucent azure, Cypris, is thy couch.  
Across the arch of Heaven thou liest at rest,  
And Helios kisses thy brow to a fire-opal. . . .”

### DIARY

5th March, 1914.—For practically the first time I enjoyed reading Horace. His melting, ringing speech is wonderful, and the grace of every gesture enchanting. If we use the word “modern” not for that which is alive and growing to-day, but for the chief characteristic of the era of individualism and impressionism which is just departing, then one can say that the gracefulness of Horace is modern, in contrast to the Greek *Charis*. With the Romans everything is more intellectual, becomes much more a matter of tone and sound, and declines to the level of an amusing game. In the Greek artists, on the other hand, even in the case of the graceful Anacreon,

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how strong and full-blooded it all is, how clear-sighted and fragrant! It is creative, Eros lives therein, Eros, of whom the poet of Keos says:

“ With his hammer gigantic Eros has felled me,  
Like a smith, and has flung me into a torrent of ice ”

while Horace knows only Amor, the “ mischievous boy.”

### DIARY

17th March, 1914.—Read a great deal of *Protagoras*. Contains much that is *most* significant and profound about great men. But sometimes I despair of ever understanding it. Have we any idea what ἐν πράττειν, εἰσθλός, καλός, ἀγαθός, κακός, κακῶς, πράττειν means? We translate everything into Christian terminology.

### DIARY

Halberstadt, 3rd April, 1914.—After a very jolly trip, arrived in the afternoon at Halberstadt, mother's birthplace. We drove straight to the Cathedral. First went to the queer beautiful court of the Monastery. The hall of the chapter is very interesting. What most thrilled me here were the tremendously impressive wood carvings with their unsurpassed beauty, their fierce, chaotic, flowing lines. Yet I admire the Romanesque statues more, the overwhelming one of the Mourning Virgin on the Rood (or the Rider in Bamberg). I detest the

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

naturalism of some of the later works, though I feel their supernatural fervour; but the flame should remain pure, otherwise it will not ascend to God, but will descend to the Devil, who sometimes sits very near Him. One thing is odd: in Klinger's *Christ on Olympus* the chains of the Titans are loosened. Can the Titans have conquered and the Nazarene be one of them?

. . . To a charming little building of the early German Rococo period, which houses the Museum. This remarkable style in the French aristocratic art as transformed by the German bourgeois was already known to me from the houses in the ramparts of Nymphenburg. One gets the impression that the graceful, pure Rococo arabesques are super-imposed on an almost Adams foundation. Its charm gains precision, almost dignity, from this. The play of line wipes out all disturbing banality and a very happy harmony results.

### DIARY

*Goslar, 7th April, 1914.*—The chapel, the hall of which used to be kept open but is now shut in by half-decayed doors, contains some important works of art, but arranged in the kind of order you expect to find in a respectable lumber-room. You are first struck by a fearsomely realistic Christ, terrible in the agony expressed in the tortured mouth. It belongs to those works which destroy our preconceived artistic views, which leave us uncertain as to whether

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they are elemental or divine, horrible or sublime ; but one thing is certain—they are far removed from anything human, infinitely removed in *real* understanding.

### DIARY

18th April, 1914. (*Home again.*)—Read *Othello* for the first time, with tremendous joy and delight, till late at night. What a god is Shakespeare ! What an intense life, what a prodigally creative temperament !

### TO HIS MOTHER

*Zehlendorf, 2nd May, 1914* \*\* :

" When thou descendest from Fiesole,  
With Settignano leaning, on thy left,  
Against the hillside : Arno on the right,  
With all the treasures of that matchless vale  
Open before thee, in the golden glow  
Of afternoon ; velvety stillness lying  
Upon the slope save for the cuckoo's lure—  
There came to thee Life's fulness, ardour, power,  
In one enchanted hour.  
Think not I envy thee !  
Here in the North  
The Sun shines on us too.  
Out of the sand  
Of this old Mark life blossoms sturdily,  
And joy that Italy's luxurious charm  
Cannot surpass.  
'Neath the bent brows of storied palaces  
May thy work grow and prosper, firmly founded.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

And grand as they—Mother, I wish it thee,  
That in the scent of roses Florentine,  
Orange and white and crimson, thy creation  
Shall breathe in rest and sweetness.

This I wish thee.

May it grow strong as tempered steel among  
Germany's hills, and may it reach completion  
Here in our home—Mother, I wish thee this."

The garden is starting to bloom, there will be such a lot of lilies of the valley; I am sending you the first ones, that have the tender leaves of very early spring. The lilac is just beginning to be fragrant. Everything sends you a thousand greetings and the flower nymphs are stretching out their tiny arms towards heaven, praying that joy, strength and abundance may be given to you. I can see it quite plainly and believe in it. I hope you do too.

### DIARY

12th May, 1914.—Read Wagenseil's pretty *Nürnberg Chronicle*, then Middle High German Lyrics. They are exceptionally poetic. I read the anonymous ones and *Henry VI.*: "I greet ye sweet ones with song . . ." and these charming verses: "The wood stands wrapped in greenest garb!" It is the most graceful portrayal of a young, shy, tender love. And how extraordinarily fascinating the Kürnberger is! I am not saying this out of pedantry or desire for originality, "the last refuge of complex minds," but because I feel that these poems, with their excessively simple and yet



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graceful lines, speak a language that we understand . . . Von Morungen is tremendously passionate and that, I suppose, is why we like him best. If you have read these beautifully clear, warm and courageous poems, you will not think it an exaggeration to say that this is one of the most wonderful descriptions of a man's love that we know, which unites great sensuous passion with restrained power. I am thinking of that song of overflowing bliss :

" The wood in glory of green hue . . .  
In such high rapture, weaving dreams . . . "

or the glorious *Aubade*. I have never read so many poems which made me wonder why I did not write them ?

### DIARY

*Darmstadt, 14th July, 1914.*—The Madonna of Holbein. I must have sat three quarters of an hour gazing at its unutterable limpid beauty. Other things may be more powerful, but herein lives God.

### DIARY

*Maulbronn, 15th July, 1914.*—A lovely walk in the rain-wet silver air, past fir and beech woods. When we left the commodious farm houses behind, their doors firmly fastened, so that we were alone, then all the wonderful majesty of the German Middle Ages lay spread before us like the glory of heaven. Walking through the well-proportioned and spacious halls

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of the rich monastery, marvel upon marvel was unfolded before our gaze : the miracle of piety, the miracle of Germany, the miracle of the Middle Ages, the miracle of beauty, the miracle of the God whose living presence you can feel.

The success with which the style of different periods has been combined in these halls makes the assumption that it was done deliberately seem as strange and impossible as that it was not. In many places the style is pure Romanesque, at once powerful and attractive in its harmonious symmetry of curves, next to it we find delicate Gothic shooting forth, and further on, later Gothic with all its ornateness. How one's gaze rejoices again and again in the door to the little fountain house that is set with arches pointed on the inside, or in the series of interlaced flying buttresses in the Parlatorium. But by far the most magnificent is the large Refectory. Three huge pillars, ringed in the middle, support the whole building, which slopes gradually down towards the sides in the soft curves of the transition style. The proportions of height and width are absolutely right, but in the secular Refectory, built in pure Romanesque style, the seven double pillars support a somewhat sombre vaulting.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Oberhambach, 19th July, 1914.*—I think I have learnt a great deal latterly. Apart from the fact that I saw in Bruchsal the finest Baroque castle

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that exists, and in Maulbronn a Romanesque monastery too beautiful for words, and that I gained in Heidelberg an ineffaceable impression of the castle, apart from this, I think I have gathered a great deal of human experience which I needed very much ; but which is a little disturbing because it may lead to a dissipation of energy. But, if you will forgive my boldness, I think I may say that I have already enough fixity of purpose not to be turned aside from my path by so great a variety of activities. Of course, I need long solitary walks, and thoughts expressive of great longing, which I may confess are often, but not always, of you, to collect myself and make myself steady and resolute again. You will see that I am somewhat confused, which is not surprising. Though I shall hardly come back more self-contained or more rested, I shall have a richer and wider outlook. How do you like this ?

" The vale lies now before me, poured  
In gracious lines, the evening breeze  
Plays with my hair, the mountains rise  
Peak beyond peak before my eyes.  
But on the plain, whose poplars shake  
The light to ripples, still the day  
Plays out its warm and rapturous play.  
The sky towards which I lift my arms  
Arches a tent of blue and gold,  
And my song soars to meet the stars,  
As soars a circling falcon bold,"

etc., etc., *ad infinitum*. The poem really shows arrogance.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

*21st July, 1914.*—On the way to Heidelberg I read the history of the town. You can really learn quite a lot from local history. It throws a light on general history from one central point, and all the larger changes are curiously mirrored in it. There are few things which, if well done, could be made more instructive.

### DIARY

*Speyer, 22nd July, 1914.*—I was deeply impressed by the spacious, beautifully lofty interior of the Cathedral, the plan of which is clear and classical in main outlines and design. In contrast to the sinister might of the Worms Cathedral, the extravagant display of the proud fame of the Ancient Salic Emperors is seen here in all its prodigal profusion. Even the painting, bad and poor in detail, gets its effect from the range of its colours. The whole gives one a rare feeling of dignity and splendour. Of course, the knowledge that I was standing over the graves of the Emperors made me feel that I was on consecrated ground. Then we went to the crypt, and one might imagine that the whole cathedral rests on those mighty, square-built pillars. It reminded me of the crypt of San Lorenzo in Florence, but that cannot be compared with these great, bold arches. The tomb of Rudolf of Hapsburg which we looked at by candlelight is austere and beautiful: he

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is truly "Forefather Rudolf." Indeed, a recitation of George's poem would be enough to construct the Romanesque vault vividly before your eye. You would not believe how suitable are these majestic verses in their harsh yet restrained animation here. The rhythm of the Romanesque seems to vibrate in them just as the splendour of the Salic Empire does in the vault itself. We walked round in silence. One is overwhelmed by so many memories that all other things vanish.

### TO JULIE V.

*Zehlendorf, 2nd August, 1914.*<sup>22</sup>—. . . Even if all else be so veiled and dark that we cannot see into the future, one thing I am certain of: *Germany cannot perish*. I do not, like the braggarts, base this assertion on any conviction of the perfection of our attainments, but on the knowledge that we have not yet fully realised ourselves. The Germany we carry in our hearts is not yet incorporated in concrete form. We may have said all we have to say in music, but in pictorial art and architecture, in poetry and, above all, in the moulding of life, we have not yet fulfilled our destiny. Our task is heavy, heavier than that of other peoples, because we are more versatile and many-sided. In Goethe as man and artist we find richness and abundance, the innermost expressed in concrete form, but it is always the individual who has to create his own

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

form out of the unformed and the chaotic. Hölderlin's longing has remained unfulfilled :

" Creative genius of our race,  
When shall we know thy radiant face ? "

A high level of individual culture cannot lead to our full development. The realisation of our true nature can only be attained by a collective effort of the community, which will cast life in a big mould. Only if this happens can we build the " new creation " of which Hölderlin sings, so that it shall be unique, and bear witness to us. Not till then will the promise of the Middle Ages be fulfilled and that which the greatest and best of us have dreamed : " that all shall be united at the great feast."

In this sense and with this aim before me, I want to go out in order to preserve our holiest treasure : Germany. It seems stupid and contemptible to spare or preserve oneself. The Greeks knew the true value of things when Aeschylus esteemed it higher to have fought at Marathon than to be a poet. I want to fight for the preservation of the German spirit and for its fulfilment. Who and what could hold me back from this ?

### DIARY

*2nd August, 1914.*—I enrolled as a volunteer. They advised me not to at the military H.Q. of the District Council ; they told me that volunteers would hardly be accepted. If only I were already called to the colours !

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### DIARY

*4th August, 1914.*—In the morning to Berlin in one of the few trains that were still running. . . . Now is the time when all elemental emotions are brought into the foreground, pain, brotherliness, readiness to help, manliness. Every one is thinking of his rightful duties and tasks. All are united in one mighty aim, all trivial things vanish. . . . Then we went to the Reichstag. One of the greatest days one could live through, for, however it may end, this 4th of August is immortal.

The Chancellor's face was almost tragic.

### DIARY

*6th August, 1914.*—Now Belgium has declared war too. But

“Hearts that are staunchly for the right  
Are not dismayed before the fight.”

How divine is Hölderlin's *Death for the Fatherland* ;  
I was utterly carried away by it.

### DIARY

*18th August, 1914.*—Had a long talk with Pa about my joining the Army. I believe this war has come to our time and to every individual as a fiery test to make men of us all, men prepared for the terrific events in the years to come.

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### DIARY

21st August, 1914.—My grandfather's birthday. I bought a lovely wreath and went with it to Hasenheide, where he still hears cannon-shot and shouts of command in his grave. There I prayed :

“ I follow now where thou didst tread,  
Oh, Grandsire, let thine eyes attend me !  
And when I call on thee to lend me  
Thy courage—may thy care forlend me,  
And thy high soul on me be shed ! ”

### DIARY

17th September, 1914. *Before leaving for his Regiment.*—So I will end this book. All my longing and all my desire I poured out to the gods yesterday, in a prayer prouder and humbler than any before. I am setting out in great joy and expectation, not in search of adventure and the spurious excitement of unknown experiences, but in the firm belief and hope that I shall become manly and firm, fully developed, broad-minded, full of power and strength, in readiness for the great life which will be waiting for me later on.

That on my return from battle and victory, honourably endured, I may find my parents with many hopes fulfilled and happy in new work, that I may find myself again, well and strong and ready for anything the world may offer, that I may find my country again, grown prouder and yet more modest,



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stronger and more courageous, pregnant with the rising form of the new era—in spite of the conflicts and the raging storms of the yet unredeemed future ; that I may play my part in helping to create this new era in the spirit of the still sleeping godhead ; this, oh, ye ruling powers, I hope for, I implore, nay I demand, of you.

## **PART III**

**EXTRACTS FROM DIARIES AND LETTERS WRITTEN  
BETWEEN THE AGES OF SEVENTEEN AND TWENTY**



## FOREWORD TO PART III

THE boy of seventeen was called to the war. Close to the springs of life, yet a stranger to life, intimate with the fates of nations and heroes, yet unfamiliar with the world of everyday, and often base, creatures, he goes to war. And in all the storm and stress he proves himself to be true and steadfast to the character which had been moulded to such pure symmetry in the peace of his home. In the unexampled fate of his country, in this struggle of one against so many, he caught the mighty rhythm of an epic without words. In the midst of tremendous events, his heart beats fearless and strong. Echoes of the poets accompany him into battle; he raises the spirits of his companions with Homer's verses and Hölderlin's hymns when they are trying to bury the corpses of the fallen in a night of storm and terror.<sup>29</sup> In the midst of all this horror he yet dreams of the coming years and is filled with happy expectation.

He looks into the face of death, which tears his dearest companions from his side. And now he suffers the worst blow of all; his mother dies. He sinks to the darkest depths of misery. But the abyss which threatens to engulf him becomes the source of divine vision. He fathoms the depth of Existence, the revelation of the Eternal, which transcends the turmoil of life.

## FOREWORD TO PART III

Rarer grow the outpourings of his heart, during the period of his convalescence and during his employment in a Government office. Studies, ideas and plans, political and strategic, take up more of his time ; he confides more to his intimates in talk, not so often to his diary. He is inspired by an invincible desire for action, intense devotion glows in him, he can no longer sit at home while his companions are in danger and need.

Once again he offers himself to the gods. Had they already granted him in the "Hour's hand the fulness of eternity?" Did they regard him as having attained fulfilment? They took the precious gift.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Graudenz, 21st September, 1914.*—I am gradually learning what a marvellous educational institution the Prussian Army is! You cannot have any idea how intolerable it is to one's self-respect to have to listen to the disgusting swearing of the N.C.O.'s, but combined with stable duty it is truly an incomparable schooling. You just learn to bear everything, and to pull yourself together, because you have to. I'm sure there will be times when I shall be even wearier than to-day, but what odds?

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Graudenz, 22nd September, 1914.*—I was so pleased with your cheerful letter that I must write at once. I am sitting on an upturned waggon, while the horses are straining at their bits, neighing and champing. Military service is really marvellous, and it is just the fact that at times you feel you have got to the end of your tether that makes it so stimulating and makes you strong in body and mind. Imagine a beautiful, fragrant morning, the rising sun shining over the great training ground, with its softly undulating hills, charming little peasant cottages on the one side, and tender pine trees showing in the distance on the other. We are going to ride there now, head erect in the cool morning air.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Graudenz, 29th September, 1914.*— . . . And now I must write you something rather awful and you must not let it upset you. I would say nothing if I had not promised myself this morning, and Uncle Victor<sup>33</sup> before I left, always to be honest. We rode differently to-day, and when we stopped I didn't know whether I could stand at all, whether my fingers were torn off, or only badly cut, as they turned out to be. I was really convinced that I would not be able to endure military service any longer. In the afternoon things were a little better. We were kept to it, fighting with lances, and interminable and very quick alternations of long-distance running, lying down, running and so forth. The others were quite done, but I stood it pretty well, though the sergeant said before that we were much too young, we could not even hold our lances properly.<sup>40</sup> I have told you everything quite openly. I am just as enthusiastic about the training as I was—perhaps even too much so—the question is simply whether I am able to stand it physically. I shall be glad if I *can*.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Graudenz, 30th September, 1914.*—Batmen are a bit of a problem. I do not see at all why I should be superior to men who are just as good or better than myself in all the qualities needed here (and that is the only thing that counts). It is not a matter

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of mathematics or French or Greek, but simply of the military competence of a person, a competence which is, no doubt, dependent on higher mental qualities in the higher ranks, but not at all in the lower. That is why I do not like having my stirrup polished by a man who, in experience, knowledge and capacity, is my superior, and with whom I feel on an equal footing through his simple and beautiful love of our country.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Graudenz, 12th October, 1914.*— . . . My fate is immutably written in the stars, beyond all favour and accident.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Graudenz, 13th December, 1914.*—What I already knew when we parted in Zehlendorf has now happened; to-morrow, Thursday, December 14th, I leave for the Polish front.

I will not try to console myself and you, my dear parents; I cannot, and indeed, these things are beyond consolation. I do not like using the words because I do not want to seem reckless, but if I could imbue you with the same firm belief that I hold in the mighty Power that watches over me, you would be calm and would have confidence in me and my Star. I embrace you and kiss you with deepest love.

Your Orro.

Read Psalm 91, which I carry over my heart.



## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

### TO HIS PARENTS

25th December, 1914. *At the Front (Base).*—On Christmas Day, with the roar of the cannon, in a big barn with horses shuffling and champing; sitting on a small box writing by the light of a guttering candle; opposite me a man searching his dog for lice, and telling me that he only found three to-day—have I ever written you a letter in such romantic circumstances?

These Polish towns are very amusing. A number of pompous buildings, especially churches, monasteries and convents, all inexcusably pretentious; the shapelessness of the *ensemble* leaves a very unfavourable impression. This may be due to the fact that land was cheap and abundant; but there must also be some deeper cause for the unrefined architecture (unrefined in its original sense) in which there is no sign of any desire for coherent unity and which allows a big, quite shapeless market-place to be planted in the very middle of the town without any relation to the small houses around it.

### DIARY

16th January, 1915.—In the evening read Aeschylus' *Prometheus*, in quite a good translation. Some of it I thought out in the Greek and then it became tremendous. What an impression of unimagined grandeur and fervour this work gives me. It is most refreshing and enjoyable.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### TO HIS PARENTS

17th January, 1915. *In the Field.*—One of the marvellous things about war is that the elementary, primitive and simple reigns not only over our minds and spirit, but permeates all things down to the very smallest. It is only now that we find out what home and hearth and all those objects of daily use and daily need mean, what they actually consist of, stripped of all ephemeral ornamentation, it is only now, when we have to make them ourselves, that we discover it.

This terrific thing I am living through—the war—seems to me the all-powerful fundamental impetus to the classical, to form and precision. War, which was for our ancestors the fulfilment of their romantic passions, yea, the ideal of romanticism, is for us a sublime fate, an inevitable necessity, and we must live through it in order that the spirit of this restless and mobile age may become resolute and stern, solemn and austere, mature and pregnant with the glorious deeds of the future, in all their virile beauty.

I am afraid these observations from one who is merely vegetating at the base may appear quite worthless, may even be misunderstood as pure clap-trap—surely the worst substitute for barrenness of mind. But you will discover some meaning behind it all, even though it is not clearly expressed.

### TO HIS PARENTS

26th January, 1915. *On Active Service (Base).*—  
You know that my life is not directed by luck or

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chance disturbances, but that the streams that flow in it will expand and make islands and will not come to an end till they have found their natural outlet in the all-embracing ocean.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*1st February, 1915. On Active Service (Base).—*This war, however far-reaching its consequences, does not seem to me to be one single event. It is quite obviously of its age and in the future one will have to say: This war stamped its whole character on the period which it began. A surging age is being born, breaking forth here in wars, there in revolutions, here in social transformations, there again in songs and books, but all is equally characteristic of it. A new world is coming to life! Thus, in the wars of Alexander was Hellenism born; in the Civil Wars of Rome, the Empire; during the migrations of the races, the early Middle Age (Germanic); in the Crusades, the later Middle Ages (Romantic); the Modern Era in the Reformation and Thirty Years War; the bourgeois world (or age of the middle class) in the Napoleonic Wars, and our age, of which the World War is but the opening bar, will bring forth with tremendous convulsions the unprecedented and unforeseen.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*20th February, 1915. On Active Service.—*The historical novel is a very difficult, almost insoluble

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

problem. An indispensable foundation, of course, is an exact knowledge of the times, and the only means of attaining this is an exhaustive investigation of sources. You undoubtedly succeeded in solving the problem in your *Love Letters*, but the Rococo period is hardly yet a matter of history for us, and even less for you. But if, as I imagine, you are considering the Middle Ages, it is considerably more difficult. Though you will find all the important sources for separate periods—*e.g.*, for that of Henry VII—translated in Dyks collected publications (I have their catalogue in the cupboard by the window under "D"); and though there are excellent collections in existence—and you will find the Fathers of the Church, if I am not mistaken, likewise translated and published in the Kösel Edition—yet it is enormously difficult to fill a period like that with *their* life, and not ours. How rarely is anything quite true or quite perfect. Think of the vagueness—even if it is charming—of C. F. Meyer, and on the other hand the academic manner of Mereschkowski. In Mereschkowski it is perhaps the Bacchus Feast in the Lionardo, in Meyer's *Heiligen* it is the rare beauty of the old English Cathedrals, which are most living. In fact, here as everywhere, I consider Art our surest guide; only he who succeeds in saturating himself with the spirit of the art of any period can see that period alive and as a whole.

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### TO HIS PARENTS

*Lowicz, 2d March, 1915.*—These times bring out the simplest and most primitive, the clearest and oldest emotions. I always return to the same thoughts. Now, as in the times that Homer sings of, it is the elemental things that count: love and friendship, hate and envy, wounds and death, healing and murder, and everything else from dawn, when the wheels of the sun-god rise in the heavens, till dusk, when the streets grow dark and night folds over gods and men. I am looking forward tremendously to reading the Books of the *Iliad* again, and I think I shall understand them much better now.

### DIARY

*2d March, 1915.*—The phrase "Be sufficient unto thyself" signifies for me not being dependent in everything on the judgment and sympathy of others, but being able to carry pride and poise within myself, living *from within* and remaining calm and serene in the midst of struggle. I think I have partly achieved this, and even if I have not yet got out of that bad habit of showing an ardent interest in too many things, I am yet well on the way to keeping it within bounds. In this sense, "be sufficient unto thyself" still holds good. But never will I identify it with the exhortation to seek the hateful peace of the stoic, because I think that is the sign of a decadent age. For the true man and

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the strong nation have passions and they wrestle with them and, as Nietzsche would say, they transmute them into joys in the smoking fire of the furnace.

### TO HIS MOTHER

*16th March, 1915. Base.*—Is not the true being of a man to be found in what he becomes, and did you not come to be what you are because you were what you were?

### TO JULIE V.

*20th March, 1915. Base.*—Always I am reading Hölderlin's poems. It is really remarkable how you learn to read at the Front; only a few books up till now, Faust, Hölderlin and Zarathustra, but, as should be, learning these almost by heart. Sometimes I think that I may write poems again, too; but this I must say once and for all; I feel that a poet is a king, who rules over his material, and that is why he can mould it; but who is capable of controlling such material as now surrounds us?

### TO HIS PARENTS

*25th March, 1915. On Active Service.*—I cannot tell you, my dear parents, how wonderful I feel in the trenches. This feeling of danger and the first baptism of fire has a tremendous fascination. In spite of all the horror that accompanies it, the gruesome unburied dead, the destruction and desolation everywhere, this combat does make life so much

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more intense. Believe me, never have I more ardently wished to go on living, never have I felt the beauty of life more deeply than now, when for the first time in my young life I look into the face of death. Life is incomplete without death, struggle is incomplete without death, yet it is victorious triumph that both desire, and death seems less terrible when one has understood that it is the inevitable corollary to life.

In the evening we were relieved, and after an all too rapid farewell to our friends, marched towards Belchov in the dark, singing all the way. As the Battalion that we are to replace is back from the Pilica, we "need" not go there any more; instead of that, we shall get the honourable task of repairing the road! I tell you honestly that I sometimes think of joining the infantry if this goes on: drover, mender, but never soldier. But, as you know, I am a child in hope and faith, and so I do not think March can go out with only this one foretaste of coming action—the March from which I had hoped so much.

### TO HIS MOTHER <sup>41</sup>

31st March, 1915. *On Active Service.*—The weather is glorious now, and air and sky are in harmony and trembling with expectation, as if every breeze carried with it a god of Spring. The dawns break in unsurpassed splendour, and I can hardly express what a strong echo all this finds in me. For days past I have been filled with a strange longing and an almost feverish impulse to action. This

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desire is so strong that its very intensity is almost achievement. Our inactivity behind the lines cannot last much longer. Although March, from which I had expected so much, disappointed me, my hope is as fervent as ever, and so I am able to bear the many small unpleasantnesses that come my way. Please do not be anxious on my account. I do not even want to trouble you with them. For the captain, after being very friendly for a short time, is the same as ever. Meanwhile, I make the most of my time, getting to know people. I do not think you could have a better opportunity for this than in the army in war time.

Now to speak of something else. One remark in your letter was brought home to me very strongly. You seem to intimate that perhaps I have become a stranger to your life and doings and mine, which was so intimately bound up with yours. But, darling mother, the one thing above all others that makes me glad and strong nowadays is that I feel more and more, from day to day, how essential, how wonderfully organic and how perfect a part of myself was my former life. Every generation and every individual must surely fight its fight with the former generation, and somehow in silence and but little noticed, I must have done it too ; but it seems just as certain that this fight need not always mean so complete a break as it was in your case ; it may develop a lot that is in you, yet it must use up valuable energy too. Surely some day a generation



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will arise which is destined to complete and perfect, to build and construct, and which therefore must not spend its best years in the struggle and fight for self-assertion. This opinion, which takes ever stronger hold of me, carries me above all obstacles and accidents.

The thought of coming home now without having attained my goal is just as unbearable to me as the idea that I might die at this moment. I may say this in all honesty, because you know that I am not a coward. The *same thought* haunts all my dreams, whether I am thinking of beautiful walks in Fiesole, of glorious summer days in Zehlendorf, or in the mountains, whether I am imagining deeds of battle or serene days after my return filled with happy talks with you both. *Always* I feel that I shall become a complete being, and that present, past and future will yet grow into one complete and perfect whole. All this may sound rather confused, but I had to write it from my heart just for once, and somehow my meaning will reach you.

### DIARY

*31st March, 1915.*—To-day we go up to the front again to dig trenches. At least it is the front! I am going quite mad from this everlasting sitting still and doing nothing. It is marvellous Spring weather, the sky is so full of the future, and I am again full to the brim of hope, yearning, expectation, craving and passionate desire for release.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

*1st April, 1915.*— . . . To-day, in front of the sergeant-major and some N.C.O.'s the captain shouted at me, without any reason, in a way that I don't wish to describe further. Such complete lack of control in an officer was very painful. Every day I grow more calm, and, I may say, more serene, in the face of such behaviour, yet these scenes leave something worse than a bad taste in the mouth, because, completely defenceless as I am, they slowly but surely undermine my moral powers of resistance, which are bent on fighting, and not at all on meek forbearance. I know people here in the squadron who have gone to pieces through the behaviour of the company commander, and that alone. Even if there cannot be the faintest possibility of his breaking me, nevertheless I will try now, come what may, to get out of his company. Lieutenant C. advised me strongly not to file a complaint, as the captain would be put in the right any way. There's little doubt about that, but the friendly advice I had hoped to get from Lieutenant C. was not forthcoming either.

### DIARY

*2nd April, 1915.*—Went for a long walk with P., and not only was it delightful to be with a human being again, but everything he talked about was very interesting. I discovered that the disgustingly bloated K., who is outwardly so friendly, hates me

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intensely, that the captain, who at least shows his base nature openly, intends "to make me impossible in the regiment," and a lot more." The more plainly I realised all this, the stronger grew my old desire to get into the infantry. So I will write to Father at once and perhaps I can get transferred to France.

### TO JULIE V.

*3rd April, 1913. On Active Service.*—I was so pleased with your cheerful letter that I quite lost all that feeling of depression which the futility of my present existence had given me. It is futile, because what I ought to be getting out of the war I am not getting out of it; futile, because I am just vegetating here in a job that is absolutely unimportant for me; and more than futile, absolutely harmful, because instead of being hardened and strengthened by war, I am being weakened, exhausted and embittered by the never-ending attacks that are made on me and against which I am powerless. In years to come when I look back upon this time, I shall always say that it made me worse and uglier, but, if possible, I shall learn my lesson from the fact that my decency, my absurd childish stupidity in all that involves knowledge of human nature, received a few hard knocks. I admit (when, as now I reflect calmly, which doesn't happen often) that the blunting of my all-too-tender conscience, the realisation of human baseness, must be very useful. All the same I most emphatically reject

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your sentiment : " May all that comes a blessing prove to you," " for really nothing here is blessed. I am extremely glad that my letters succeeded in hiding all the ugly and horrid things here, although sometimes a sudden feeling of being unable to stand it any longer did burst out in them.

You will spare me the recital of single occurrences ; suffice it (as it must unfortunately suffice me) to know that, thank Heaven, I have retained my composure in face of every affront, and in my dealings with people in general as well ; a fact which makes some of them very indignant ; but all the same, it is preying on me more and more.

Just once more to make clear the reasons that led me to my decision " ; first, there is this deadening inactivity behind the front, and secondly, to put it quite bluntly, the fact that life both in the regiment and in the company is intolerable. Will you, in consideration of all these things, urge my father to see to my transfer as quickly as possible ?

How I should like to talk to you in detail about Pindar, if I only knew him better ! In any case, there is no translation that gives one even a glimmer of him, and Hölderlin, who would have had the power to do so, could only render him in his unparalleled beauty when not befogged by madness. Though I am pretty familiar with other Greek poems, Pindar I had not yet dared to approach, but that will come, and there is in particular one glorious song of

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Simonides on the fighters at Thermopylæ which is among those that I still know by heart and which I repeat to myself in exceptional moments.

" The fame of those that fell  
At far Thermopylæ fills all the world,  
And like a beacon-fire shines their doom."

### TO HIS FATHER

3rd April, 1915. *On Active Service.*—What I have to write to you to-day is well-considered and my irrevocable decision. My only request is that you do not get anxious, that you calm mother if she does, and above all, that you support me in every respect.

On account of certain occurrences in the company of which there is no reason to tell you at present, I have been compelled, as far as I can, to avoid any further relations with Captain G. Since, unfortunately, I no longer feel sufficient confidence in our officers to speak to them openly about such a matter, in a moment of great perplexity, I approached P., the only man I like in the regiment. I did not think he could help me and only wanted to unburden my mind for once to some sensible person. But he knew much more than I thought, and consequently I could take the decision about which I am writing this letter. For it was his frankness, which only hinted at the worst, that showed me quite clearly that I have nothing to lose and no more to seek in this "great" regiment. But I must leave all

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further details for the present. You may take it from me that I have given the matter a great deal more thought than might appear from this unexpected letter. Weeks ago I had been seriously considering the idea of joining the infantry. I do not know whether I wrote to you about it ; at any rate I spoke to Lieutenant D. about it and he advised me strongly not to. In the days following on our visit to the trenches, when it appeared more and more certain that we should remain quartered here till the Greek kalends, while the sky was so full of Spring and I more and more filled with hope and longing to be doing something, I often thought of the infantry without arriving at any definite decision ; I just dreamed about it. But now when pride and self-respect compel me to leave this regiment (I emphasise that it is not the regiment which is throwing me out) mere dreams and desires turn to firm decision. Thus I put my fate entirely in your and mother's hands, and ask you not to answer this letter by demanding further information, but to get the matter under way at once. I am sure you will find something immediately, and I have only one request—do it quickly. Do not think that I have committed any folly ; indeed, rest assured that nothing of the sort has occurred. You will not misunderstand this step of mine. I do not think that I shall have to be ashamed of it ; on the contrary, I hope it will yet bring us all honour and joy. I embrace you lovingly.

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### TO HIS FATHER

8th April, 1915. *On Active Service*—To-day, when you have probably received my letter with my request to be transferred, my mind is very heavy at the thought of the agitation it may have caused you. But, believe me, even if, as I notice more and more to my horror, I am still childishly immature, even if I still have too tender a conscience and too little self-assurance, I have become man enough not to enter into a resolve like this lightly, nor in the heat of rising passion, only to repent it afterwards. My resolution is as firm or firmer than on the first day, and I do entreat you most earnestly not to try to dissuade me from it. That would be hopeless.

The evening post has just brought a letter from you which moved me almost to tears. A thousand thanks for your dear, dear lines.

Did you read in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* those very telling remarks of Simmel's about death? You must have liked them, for they are so profound and solemn. I should not have believed him capable of it; it is only in his impossible conception of the Classical, whose chaste and simple beauty always escapes him, that he shows himself the pedant and the hair-splitter.

Two problems are occupying my mind just now; social democracy and the closer union of Germany and Austria. The economic consequences for German agriculture of taking up the agrarian state

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of Hungary into the German economic body, and likewise the effects on Austrian industrial life, I cannot judge, of course, and so the detailed pamphlet by Sylvester announced by Hirzel would interest me very much.

### TO HIS MOTHER

*10th April, 1915. On Active Service.*—Once more, on a beautiful day of early spring, with the storks flying over the roofs and German soldiers ploughing the fields, I would like to explain to you why I must get away.

It is preposterous that the memory of these times should be filled for me with petty annoyances and revenge, almost an outrage that, where others speak of courage and sacrifice, I should be able to talk only of cowardice, ill-will and stupidity. Meanness and the petty conflicts of everyday life may school one, but surely only great and splendid things really help to mould one's character. I hope all this talk will not annoy you ; it is meant more sincerely than it may sound. To put it shortly ; the uneventfulness of our life behind the front, which became insupportable even to most of the men, made our superior officers lose that fine spirit of brotherhood brought forth by the common danger and, though there were a few notable exceptions, usually the further away you get from the whistling of the shells, the more they played the master, often hardly knowing what they were doing in their arrogance. Much



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as I like being friendly to people who are friendly to me, my pride absolutely forbids me to go at all out of my way to meet people who treat me in an unfair and vulgar manner. On the other hand, N.C.O.'s and old soldiers have told me that many things would have been different if I had taken up a more determined attitude from the beginning. Thus my politeness and my friendliness only did me a lot of harm. Yet even this was not decisive. What was decisive was that our captain took a dislike to me, nourished this dislike during our long rest and got his "courage" back again when we were out of range of the shells. He took every petty opportunity to talk about me at Staff H.Q. . . .

I must ask you not to get agitated in any way. The fact that I am sure to be transferred has quite restored my equanimity.

Oh, if I could only once in this war show what I can do, so that when I come back I may grow and develop, and above all, create and be what I wanted to be. Getting away from here, where I am growing sterile, will help me in this.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*15th April, 1915. On Active Service.*—The most difficult thing about the whole affair is Mackensen, whom it will be almost impossible to convince. For an officer is always an officer. Of course, he will make inquiries of the regiment and Herr K. will know how to get out of it. He will just write

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"Braun was guilty of unmilitary behaviour and incapacity on Active Service." In such circumstances the Kaiser himself could do nothing. Of course, I will try to explain everything to you, best of all, verbally ; all I want to tell you to-day is that insults are directed against me from two quarters : the company (Captain G.) and that is directed more against me, and the regiment (K.), and that is directed more against you. . . . Both of them hate me and remarks have been dropped about you (nobody wanted to tell me them at first) which alone are enough and final.

### DIARY

*17th April, 1915.*—The sergeant-major received me with the words : " Well, Braun, you've managed it. And I too (?). You will not accompany us to-day, you are ordered to the Signals Section in Lodz." I almost fell from the clouds, was overjoyed, of course, to get away, but at first rather appalled at the idea of Lodz. Put away all my dirty army kit and reported to the major and captain."

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Skierniewice, 17th April, 1915.*—Everything happened so suddenly, my dear parents, and so unexpectedly, that I had not even the time to write to you from old Belchow any more. You have now known for some time what happened through the quite incredible kindness of Mackensen. I am sure

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you are glad about it : let me tell you that I am very glad too. At first I was rather appalled at the 40 km. " behind " the lines, but it may be my fate, and I am more and more convinced that I shall learn and experience a lot that is important for me in the larger field of operations I shall have at Lodz.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Lodz, 21st April, 1915.*—As regards the Poles, my opinions are divided. A nation that, for the sake of an insignificant number of really cultured aristocrats, turns all the rest of its people into half-brutes, which has concentrated all its culture in a few spots, which has preserved its little castles and allowed the other " human beings " to live immediately beyond their walls in filth knee-deep, stinking, blunted and stupefied—such a nation has pronounced its own verdict. As far as my time here will allow, I shall go into the Slav question as it affects the Austrian problem.

### TO JULIE V.

*Lodz, 25th April, 1915.*—I am so glad that you were pleased. Thank heaven, you had a right to be. I am sure that I shall have a wonderful time here, in which I shall be able to learn and work a lot ; and at the same time I can be a decent human being again. The weeks I shall spend here will, without a doubt, be helpful and fruitful. The large view one gets of conditions and circumstances is extraordinarily interesting. But, of course, it goes without saying

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that I shall return to the front. . . . The Chasseurs would please me enormously for many reasons. But everything lies in the lap of the future, "θεῶν ἐν γούνασι." (I trust θεῶν!). Only I did not want the slightest doubt of this to arise from the very beginning, and so I wrote to mother, too. Nobody need think that I shall stay here till the Greek kalends.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Lodz, 28th April, 1915.*—Yesterday I finished reading Mereschkowski's *Peter the Great* with much interest. The book is eminently "topical" and is written with extraordinary skill. Of course, there is no poetry in it, and much that should be artistically constructed is artificial, but Russia stands out strong and alive. Mad and desolate, overwhelmingly and childishly weak, varying alternately between the extremes of brute and god, seething and trembling, shapeless and aimless. But who can tell what lies sleeping in its vast expanse? Do you know the verses:

"Riot and rage are fires of straw,  
Till amid this confusion wild  
A man appears. But by what law  
Can he inspire a race half-dotard and half-child?"

The last is very true. "The man" was surely Peter, and yet his life was immeasurably tragic as very few are. It may well be said that the land and its Czar mutually destroyed each other. In the end his European ideas were vanquished by the most

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senseless barbarism ; old Russia destroyed him, but he had his revenge, and in his turn he destroyed old Russia. It is impossible to imagine how this immense schism from which the country has been suffering ever since is to end. Perhaps "the one man" will arise, a greater one than Peter, who will give to this "section of the earth" (as Peter called it) an aim and a meaning, or perhaps these shapeless masses will flood proud Europe like a slowly encroaching morass, without giving birth to a new god. That would then be the end of the world, most probably. But I think the heart of the peoples still beats in Europe and will do so for a long time to come, and perhaps as Hölderlin says, it will do so yet even in holy Germany !

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Lodz, 30th April, 1915.*—I was so glad to be able to speak to you both yesterday,<sup>47</sup> and yet I did not really enjoy it because Pa's voice sounded distinctly ill. I'm sure he has not seen a doctor. I think that is acting irresponsibly. If you at home do not do everything to keep yourselves fit, to grow stronger and healthier and more energetic, in readiness for the future, what reason can we have out here not to throw ourselves blindly at the bullets ? If even soldiers, for whom after all death is always a possibility (or anyway, being wounded or physically weakened), feel a sense of responsibility towards the

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future, and are not reckless where it is not necessary, how much more should those at home hold themselves in readiness to fill the gaps that will be left. I am, alas, under the impression that father neither looks after nor spares himself. Some time ago I wrote that in this matter I must have the most complete confidence in you. If father will not do what is necessary for himself of his own free will, I think mother ought to insist on his doing it. At any rate, there can be no more wanton or wicked idea than that one is entitled to do what one likes with one's own life. If private property is ever a crime, it is so in this case.

I am now reading Plutarch's *Alexander*, which I found by chance. I am more thrilled than I thought possible and I could write pages about it.

### DIARY

4th May, 1915.—To-morrow I go to Skierniewice with the captain. I know we are going to the battalion and I am awfully glad. After all, this is not the real thing. It is all right for a few days or weeks, but it is too far away.

“The battle at the zenith broods,  
And monstrous things are brought to birth.”

### TO JULIE V.

Lodz, 9th May, 1915.—What is all the pother about this *clairvoyant* S.? I cannot help myself, the more I see of them, the more I dislike these petty

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prophets, uneducated as they are and influenced by a thousand absurd theories and systems, who pass on the deepest secrets as common scandal, giving them all sorts of base and popular interpretations. They would do better if they were silent and preserved what little wisdom they have received, or revealed it with great awe and respect only to a chosen few. These are the very things that should not be thrashed out in public or get into the newspapers or into popular gossip. Perhaps at certain times, times of the greatest exaltation, they might be shown from afar to the people, as the holy of holies. But for that all these pseudo-prophets are too little and too vain (I do not know S., so I am not speaking of him personally). I am quite certain that it is not good to know everything, it may even do harm, and it is in matters like this that it is better to divine only, and not to have definite knowledge. And that is why all the materialistic humbug of the nineteenth century appears to me much less dangerous than this kind of popularisation of profound thoughts, which reduces all mysticism to the level of tracts and newspaper rags. It is considered a sign of the spiritual needs of the public, but all the same it is a momentous mistake, because the issue can and should never be a man, or even mankind, but solely an idea, the deity, as I hope we shall once more be allowed to say (for in spite of everything this sacred word is dead in these times). Am I in favour of a Socialist State because people will be happier and more con-

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tented in it ? On the contrary, I even believe there will be constant struggle in it, and danger, deep unrest and madness, passion and thronging desires, which in the clash of the conflict will melt together and become fused into firm shape, and dying, will be cast into immortal statues. If it is comfort and tranquillity that you seek, you want enlightened absolutism or a moderate constitutionalism, but not the hot and fiery forge of the coming state which *we* are going to build.

I believe this rank mysticism of petty people, this mania for seeing spirits because one is too dull to perceive the gods, arises from the barbaric lack of form in our life in peace-time. "At last a god appears" (Rilke); we must think of this saying, it is the fingerpost to which the war points. The many-sidedness and the apparent fertility of our times deceive us as to its barbarous lack of form. But it is an empty void before the eyes of —. (You may say what you will—but I dare not and do not want to say that word yet.) Creative work is the symbol of perfection, but in this case there is much talk and confused utterance, and nowhere can we find pure crystal or true metal. That is why my eternal cry is for "Religion !" Not religiosity, but religion, which will create the form and the structure anew, and will tell of the place and the time when the holy of holies may be unveiled.

Forgive all this sentimental outpouring. I do not usually talk like this now-a-days, but I think you



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would be startled if you could see the thronging desires, the faith, the longing anticipations and urgent wishes, the storm of hope and questioning that is surging within me at present. However, I have covered myself with a pretty crust and have set up a wall in front of it, and the seething all goes on inside and sometimes I do not know myself what it is all about. But I have much faith and confidence and it is well that everything must rest for the present. See for yourself what confusion ensues if I let any of it break forth !

### TO JULIE V.

*Lodz, 80th May, 1915.*—Novalis says somewhere that he thinks it unnecessary for the wise men and poets to have written in Latin in order that they should not be understood by any but the chosen few. Even when they wrote German, their language was always a secret language, understood only by those who were meant to understand. And indeed, in their own time the Divan, the Roman Elegies, Pandora, Epimenides, Hölderlin and Novalis, and to go further back, Dante, Pindar and Aeschylus were not understood either; their meaning was hidden. That we understand them in part to-day is only due to the fact that the poet's language and spirit have penetrated the times and the innermost recesses of our consciousness. The same thing will be true of George in a hundred years' time. What I believe later ages will think barbaric in us is that we

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spoiled the rhythm of verse, which follows its own laws as regards stops, pauses and divisions, by frequently arbitrary punctuation and by obtrusively large Baroque capital letters. Of course, you can only realise these things if you recite poems instead of reading them ; if you do not buy them as you buy novels, but rather with the devotion you would show to a saint, take them out when you are thoroughly awake, and concentrate on them, struggle with them and feel them penetrate to your very marrow.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Lodz, 9th June, 1915.*—To-day we rode along by the Bzura to bathe. At the old bullet-ridden mill we suddenly came upon a gleaming medley of naked, glittering bodies of men and horses ; there were shouts and cries, a gorgeous game of mirth and laughter. Quickly we undressed and rode our horses into the water. A glorious blue sky, a thronging mass of naked people, all around munching cows and champing horses, the beautiful stream flowing between willows and birches, opposite us the ruined walls of Krepitulum—you can imagine how wonderful it was. Afterwards, dried by the sun, we returned at an even trot.<sup>41</sup>

### TO HIS MOTHER FOR JULY 2ND, 1915 <sup>42</sup>

“ Long have I sought to find a verse and measure  
Deserving this thy birthday : but alone  
The richest, most harmonious ode of all,  
Some master poet's work, were worthy thee.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

A glorious fifty years—though torn and blamed  
By Fate and fools—to-day shall dip their banners  
Before thy presence, full of power and fervour,  
And in this year of Destiny, when sunset  
Flares high to kiss the red of the new day,  
Thou standest at the heart of both, thyself,  
Born of that passing world, but pressing on  
Fearless, into the future of thy dreams.  
And in this twilight of the Gods, thou knowest  
To whom the Victory, by thy work and dreams.  
How shall I speak of all, my Mother? How  
Pour all my love into this frame of words,  
Fulfilling them? Even the song of praise  
I long to give thee is this year too hard,  
And breaks my verse and wipes its feeble bonds  
Out into ruin and confusion. Mother,  
He who would praise thee fitly must unite  
All stresses and all glories of the years  
In which thou hast lived, even as a beacon-fire.  
Forever wert thou in thy time, and yet  
So far above it; therefore wert thou able  
To catch all marred and broken effort, all  
Beginnings, up into a whole, uniting  
Into a whole, solid and greatly wrought.  
Thou didst inspire it with the breath of Life,  
But, when complete, it seemed to thee so empty,  
Empty and poor, and thou didst turn aside  
To fresh and higher tasks; as pearl on pearl,  
One effort, one achievement, followed on,  
Completing others; and the miracle  
Of old was here repeated: riches squandered  
Were multiplied, even as the Gods' good gifts  
That grow with giving.

" Shall I praise alone  
Thy life of work creative? Nay, in being  
Thyself, in that alone, thou dost earn thanks,  
Thou dost win love, and wondrous are thy ways.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

Thou dost grow greater and more beautiful  
Each day before our eyes. But now I thought  
The perfect bloom of thy dear beauty filmed  
Over with autumn's frosts ; but now, behold !  
With falcon eyes my love perceives new beauty,  
Beauty with majesty in royal splendour  
More beautiful than ever, and thy brows  
More royal under all their silvery crown,  
Calm, broad and thoughtful, as Athene's brows,  
And thine eyes deeper than all depths, and clear  
Even as the eyes of her, Mother of all,  
That face the level glory of the skies,  
But were born here on earth of mortal mould.  
' Whom the gods love die young,' they say  
believe me,

Those whom they love most, out of their heart's core,  
To them they give the brimm'd measure of life.  
And when they have drunk deep of all that wine,  
The gods lay hands of blessing on their heads,  
And as the gods themselves they gaze on life  
And all the loveliness of this dear land,  
Till, in their beauty, they pass on to more.  
Thus may it be with you, my parents both :  
I know no higher, dearer wish than this.  
Think of the hours that we celebrated  
Together, thy sweet birthday, in past years !  
We sat together, Father, you and I—  
Never such a wondrous birthday as to-day—  
I fear thou wilt not spare it any thoughts.  
And I have sent thee nothing ; everything  
Seemed poor and petty ; just one thing alone—  
A curious gift, I bring to offer thee.

" Mother, it seems presumption that I offer  
This present, for it is all incomplete,  
Half-grown and struggling, and will never equal  
My glorious hopes, and is, perhaps, not yet  
Grown and developed to the point of promise

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And sacred dedication. This strange gift  
I bring to thee and to my Father too,  
The poor return for love incalculable ;  
This gift is I myself, and this my life,  
Accept it, in the tumult of the war,  
Where it shall grow, I hope, to tempered power,  
Royally full of joy and full of praise.  
I have no gifts—only myself alone ;  
Therefore myself alone as gift I bring thee  
And though the hope may seem but poor and  
slender,

To me it is resplendent—that this war,  
And all the grief and ruin it has brought us,  
Shall be forged into lambent flames of joy  
And iron core of strength. And ye shall think,  
Some day, thou and my Father : ‘ It was *then*  
That swift creative fashioning began,  
Fashioning the world and all things fair and  
new.’

And I shall think : ‘ ‘Twas then I proved my  
mettle,

‘Twas then I formed great plans and learnt *To Do*.’  
These plans, this power of deeds, and these great  
dreams,

All that I am, all I can do and form,  
I lay down at thy feet for thine acceptance.  
As yet it lives not ; some day it shall spring  
Out of the brain of our humanity,  
In harness, and if thou shouldst wish a gift  
More ripened to perfection, for to-day  
Let this suffice. It is for now my all.

“ So, on this day of Jubilee, for all  
The grief that weighs upon you both, my parents,  
I give the deepest wishes of my heart  
That grief may turn to joy ; and for the bright  
Wealth of thine infinite love, and for the splendour  
Of all thy thoughts and deeds and all thy being,

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I give to thee the little that I am,  
And all the greatness that I long to be.  
Take it, and may thy cosmic hopes arise  
In life and deed to bless thy glorious eyes."

### TO HIS FATHER

27th June, 1915. *On Active Service.*—I have never worked so hard at any poem as at the enclosed. I wanted to express a great deal more that was of deep concern to me, but no "poem" came of it. It is just a letter in which the things I wanted to say asserted themselves in verse form.

And you, my dear father, I wish all joy and gladness for mother's birthday, above all that you may freely turn anew to the great and ever-growing tasks of the future, to help in which is my dearest wish and most intense desire.

### TO HIS PARENTS

1st July, 1915. *On Active Service.*—What I admire above all other things is action and achievement; will and desire I count but little; and so I am prepared to lend my support to anything that achieves its aim, and at least try and turn it to good use.

### TO HIS PARENTS

18th July, 1915. *On Active Service.*—The Poles here make a much better impression, which justifies certain hopes. But what most gratifies me is the

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

behaviour of the Germans. I am sitting here on a beautiful evening in front of a pretty, amazingly clean house, somewhat reminiscent of Lower Saxony. Three old trees, a lime, an oak and an elm, rise above the courtyard surrounded by barns and stables. The sturdy young peasant, with joyous German shouts, has just driven in the first piled-up harvest waggon ; from the other side his little boy drives the cattle into the yard, while their aged grandfather, with his youngest grandchild on his arm, looks on meditatively. I came through the large, well-cared-for orchard. The red of the fat cherries almost outshone the green of the leaves ; and then, stepping by a fragrant carnation bed glowing red like the fruit, I entered the house. What a pleasant surprise awaited me inside ! Well-built, clean furniture in an already slightly decorated Adams (Georgian) style ; the long soft sofa, the heavy cupboard, the slight curves of the chairs and the graceful glass-cupboard, in which were piles of pleasing gleaming china, everything, of course, of the bright pear-wood which seems just cut out for it. The whole noisy little party had just collected in front of the house, the parents and grandparents too—only the old grandfather stayed inside—and the mother gave them all their dinner, with that immortal gesture which makes of every woman, whoever she may be, a queen and a goddess ; that gesture full of pride and dignity, full of joy and charm, but more than all this, full of the infinitude of mother love.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### TO HIS PARENTS

17th July, 1915. *On Active Service.*—There is one more thing I must tell you ; few can have had so glorious and full a youth as I had, and I am grateful to you for that ; but had I not had this time in the army, which has sometimes been very bitter and difficult to bear, it might have spoiled my life. It was too pure, too good and gentle, too much isolated from all ugly things, from contact with people. Now the balance has been redressed.

### DIARY

27th July, 1915.—Beautiful weather ; went on fitting up the telegraph cable. The whole time I was most excited and thought out thrilling adventures. Suddenly I got the news that I must return at once as I was transferred to the 21st Chasseurs. That is good. I shall now get to know all there is to know of the war, the danger and the terror ; it had to be. My dreams this morning were glorious, glowing ; may the gods to whom I pray, the spirit of my forefathers that floats over me, my own strength which I feel within me, grant that I be successful. Hope and faith, desire and will, are my guides, and so I will tread this path cheerfully and securely, filled with that confidence which has always been my support.

Now shall I lift to strike thy shining sword :  
Oh, keep me true and fearless, Warrior Lord



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### TO HIS PARENTS

*2nd August, 1915. On Active Service.*—By now I am able to judge a little what things are like here, and I can say honestly that I am very glad to be here. In the first place there is quite a different tone and spirit among the soldiers which does one an immense amount of good ; secondly, there is the good fellowship, the seriousness, the faithfulness and courage, which real war brings out, a profound feeling for deep-lying things, Life and Death, Fate, Victory and Defeat. And in consequence our attitude to our superior officers is very different.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*5th August, 1915. On Active Service.*—At eight o'clock we entered Warsaw with the Division. How intoxicating that was !

### TO HIS PARENTS

*18th August, 1915. On Active Service.*—What a lot of varied experience I have already gained in this short period of actual warfare ! I have learnt that there are some very important sides of a man that one only gets to know well under fire. It is a time when many things fall away, and unsuspected qualities appear.

### DIARY

*14th August, 1915.*—I was given the command to ride over to a company that had moved up the line,

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and bring them back, and while doing that I was to link up with the 4th Division (Reserve). I took R. with me, and we galloped along in complete darkness, jumped the Russian trenches and rode straight through the village. The road bent sharply to the right and shrubs quite blocked the view. Suddenly I heard men moving and some Russian words came to our ears. R. was riding a little behind me, and said : " Oh, the Russians ! " turned his horse sharply and tried to avoid them. We tore along, then suddenly R. disappeared. It would have been madness to have stopped. I tried to get to the 3rd Company as soon as possible and make them occupy Rudnik. They did not take any notice of my request and so I had to go to the Brigade H.Q. I have never felt so awful, because I was sure that R. was dead or taken prisoner.

On my return I heard that R. had only lost his horse, but had saved himself by crawling through barns. It was the best bit of news I could have heard. Never have I been so happy. The next morning they said a lot of nice things about me, quite without cause, because it was pure luck to have found the Division so soon. However, the important thing is, my comrade is alive !

## DIARY

*16th August, 1915.*—Had a fine talk again with Lieut. Boye, an old Pforta \* boy and a classical

\* The well-known German public school. [*Tr. notes.*]

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philologist. Being able to say the names Hölderlin and Nietzsche amidst the dirt of these villages is like looking at the sun.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*Litauen, 20th August, 1915. On Active Service.*—Pouring rain, impossible quarters or no shelter at all, endless forest where no one can find his way, little to eat and a lot to do. Enough to make you very fed up, if you did not keep healthy and cheerful in spite of it all. Please send me Borchardt's translation of *Lysis*; I will write soon again.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*21st August, 1915. On Active Service.*—This morning I got the Cross. I am quite ashamed of it because a little thing like my ride to the 3rd Company and 4th Reserve Division, which I described to you, was certainly not worth it. Every chasseur who has taken part in an attack deserves it more.

. . . Even if I am not acquainted with the true economic position of Germany, I know quite well what terrific difficulties there are to be overcome. This Government will fall, whatever happens; it will go to pieces in the terrific upheaval of this crisis in the world's history. But its tragic duty in history is itself to set in motion the events leading up to this fall. Whatever way the war ends, the Government

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will surely collapse. If the war lasts long, it will die early ; but if it is over soon, it may survive a little longer.

### TO JULIE V.

*Bialowicz, 29th August, 1915.*—We are having some lovely days now, riding in this glorious forest, which is alive with wild game. One often sees herds of forty to sixty, or even eighty, red deer. Boars run in large herds, and I have seen the tracks—if no more—of the famous wild oxen, elks, lynx, and wild goats ; and others have had even greater luck.

The forest varies from moorland to the purest fir country, from sparse alders stunted with disease to mighty beech trees spreading their luxuriant foliage in rich abundance. What a joy it is to rest here ! Yesterday we camped at the edge of a marshy stream which suddenly ended in a bog ; it was very pretty, quite a home-like scene, with hundreds of camp fires dotted about the forest and its outskirts, with the mists rising from the meadows, men singing everywhere and pleasant little groups chatting or writing letters.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*4th September, 1915. In the Field.*—You may get this letter on September 17th, the day I first put on uniform. What an enormous amount has happened during this time ! I have gained much experience

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and grown in many ways. And still how senseless and useless all this would be if I had not had my boyhood, which I owe to you, the loveliest and most wisely guided any one could have had. What fire and devotion, what purity and wealth of mind and feeling came to me from you ; and all this in spite of the fact that you were tormented and persecuted yourselves. I shall never be able to express my gratitude to you. Then came the war, and with it hardships. But deep within me there is the belief that if only I survive this war, a great future lies before me.

### TO HIS PARENTS

12th September, 1915. *In the Field*.—Any leaning the soldier may have towards socialism is, after all, mainly negative. He is furious with the whole rotten bourgeois society, furious with the stay-at-homes, in fact, furious with everything at home. For the present I see no sign of any constructive political ideas. All that exists is a newly-awakened consciousness of sovereignty. Each individual has grown amazingly independent, conscious of his own worth. I am not passing judgment, I am merely stating facts. When the armies return, the self-assurance of the people will have grown tremendously. There will be at the back of them a great amount of knowledge and a consciousness of power. In order to be able to guide these masses into paths of produc-

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tive activity, one will have to know and be able to direct this gigantic accumulation of uncontrolled energy. You can rest assured, my dear parents, that I know exactly how much this future will be in need of men, and my one great wish is to be allowed to take part in creating it.

### TO HIS PARENTS

18th September, 1915. *In the Field.*—My will is resolute and fervid as never before. I have quite decided to spend many years after the war in profound study and thus become gradually fit for public life. If an unkind fate should spoil this plan, and drag me into the arena prematurely, it would be the destruction of my greatest hopes. . . . I am very glad that you received the field postcard of the Obergrainauer. That will make you see the every-day of war, sombre, grey and ugly as all every-day life is. The level of the tragic and sublime is very rarely attained; usually things are as described in that letter. But *we* do not write about that sort of thing. However, I must stop now. This letter mirrors my present state of mind, a medley of moods and impressions, hunger and intellectual interests, exciting skirmishes and draughty barns.

### TO HIS PARENTS

28rd September, 1915. *In the Field.*—I see more and more clearly the urgent necessity of studying

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the Slav question. I have made a note of several historical writings on Russia, and Trubetzkoy's *Russia as a Great Power*, Kuropatkin, Soloviev, Masaryk, and the theoretical writings of Dostoievski. Naturally, a list like this made in the field is superficial and incomplete, but I am burning to start off on all this as soon as I have some voluntary or involuntary leisure. I shall be overjoyed at getting home again, but at the same time strengthened in spirit and full of impatient desire for action.

And I should like to take this opportunity of telling you once more how glad I am to be actually on the scene of operations. The frequent days and hours of annoyance and trouble, of effort often useless, of endurance and persistence, show you what you are capable of.

### TO HIS PARENTS

28th September, 1915.—How relieved we all were to get out of these perfectly ghastly surroundings. Lice, filth, tatters—I will not even try to give you a description of my poor body !

I do not like talking of what may lie hidden in the future. It will happen as it must ; that is what I mean by servitude of the will ; but I will try and turn *everything* that does come to me to account, for *my* general purpose in life ; this is what I mean by freedom of will.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### TO HIS PARENTS

5th October, 1915.—The days are exceptionally mild and warm, and autumn with its many colours sheds its glow over all, making of the undulating country, that reminds one a little of Thuringia, one single gorgeous harmony of triumphant tints. Would you believe it, in spite of all this, my one continuous thought is, what a pity it is to lose such weeks for a "push" !

### TO HIS PARENTS

14th October, 1915. *In the Field*.—It is most unlikely that we or our children will lead uneventful lives, therefore we must brace ourselves for what may come, we must make our lives hard and crystalline. It was not in vain that the times of greatest agitation, the Roman Civil Wars, the Fifth Century in Hellas, the Renaissance, the Napoleonic Era, produced the finest inner and highest outward civilisation. We have, each one of us, so many rude instincts of unbroken, primeval strength within us, so much chaos, that no outside force can be great enough to give them shape. In my opinion, one cannot "take up an attitude" to an event such as the war—in fact, one cannot to *any* really great occurrence. (It is, to my mind, a great delusion to imagine that nothing exists about which one ought not to have some opinion or view.) I think it is



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simply nonsensical to take up any one attitude towards the war-god ; the only possible things in his presence are prayer, weeping, love, hate ; that is as much as to say that you either take your life, or start a new one.

### TO HIS PARENTS

15th October, 1915. *In the Field.*—More than ever, all depends on the people at home keeping up their strength, keeping their minds free and creative, their spirit alive and productive, while we out here, operative through death, hate and violence, can only render love, life and growth the very crudest service, even though it be the most needful.

### TO HIS PARENTS

18th October, 1915. *In the Field.*—By the way, referring to the harmony of form and content ; a form which is shattered by tremendous force from within (as in the case of the young Goethe), yet remains form. But there is so much babble that considers itself genius. This kind of "youthfulness," which, alas, is very widespread, we must energetically oppose. It falsifies the spirit of our times. I do not know whether we can count on others to any great extent in this struggle ; in any event I am coming more and more to the conclusion that in the last resort you have got to start everything yourself. If others follow you, well and good, though even then

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I am sure that they kill off what is best and most unique in you, and preserve only what has a market value.

### DIARY

19th October, 1915.—

Westward I looked ; the sunset glowed  
Beyond the Polish forests far,  
And westward all our longing flowed,  
Melting and fervent as that star.

Although on other battle lines  
War rage more fiercely far than here,  
The prison of these Polish pines—  
How it shuts off from all things dear !

Sometimes my whole soul seems to sway,  
My holy country, towards thee,  
And, mothlike, flutters with the day  
Westward through shade and storm to flee.

Yet, doubt not, in our citadel,  
Oh, ye at home ! we shall endure ;  
And if our hearts with longing swell,  
Forgive us ! Steadfast we and sure.

### TO HIS PARENTS

21st October, 1915. *In the Field*.—There are two conceptions above all others which I am just now devoted to: Service and Control. It seems essential that all our life should be enlisted in the service of the great work, felt to be sacred, and that we ought to live our life as a moral harmony, moral harmony meaning here an all-pervading spirituality, glowing

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inwardly with passion, but outwardly hard as steel, concealing in splendid measure the immeasurable. When I think of my State, a symbol of the eternal as all finite things are, which I carry in my heart as that woman saint did the name of Christ, as a visible symbol to others, then it appears to me austere and great and perfectly fashioned, but containing manifold activities in itself and a vivid play of forces.

I am now studying continuously and with real fervour—don't laugh!—field regulations, rules, manuals, etc. They contain an enormous amount of knowledge in a most concise form.

TO HERR V. E.

25th October, 1915. *In the Field.*—I must speak of one more thing which I respect but do not approve of, and that is, Alfred Weber's attitude towards Slavdom,<sup>50</sup> which seeks deliverance for the cramped condition in Germany in the great expanses of Russia; in one letter he even uses the word "spaciousness." But "spacious" applies to arcades with slender columns, where every dimension and proportion is informed with an understanding spirit; it does not betoken the infinity of endless, sombre steppes, where shaggy horses chase; Wölfflin calls Rafael's pictures "spacious," but not the Mongolian frescoes, which, with all their vastness, give you no impression of space at all. If Germany

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is destined to decay, and the world is to be divided between America and Russia (which would mean the extinction of everything that we called our gods) then I believe that out of the incestuous connection with Slavdom some few blossoms might spring, as rare and exotic as orchids, but we would all of us do better to leave this world, as Cato once did, for it will have become no fit place for us. The times and events are become so terrible in might and extent that in truth we must despair of thought; Hope for salvation only from fiery deeds, springing from the very forces of creation. I think the waters are pregnant again, as once before, when Uranus' vital part was severed with a scythe, and thrown into Poseidon's lap, that Zeus might ascend through the foaming wave. And perhaps we in our time also, may be allowed to await the ascending god.

### DIARY

1st November, 1915.—The Major gave me three weeks' leave. Riding to the station I prayed :

Oh, gentle God, from whose wise hand  
Healing and help and gladness flows,  
As I turn back to mine own land—  
Oh, give my fevered thoughts repose !

Lead Thou me there where Thy command  
To deeds of fearless honesty  
Shall be my lodestar, where I'll stand  
Firm against fear and jeopardy.

Then, like Thy servants, lead me to the fight !  
I fear no pain nor ill in Thine eyes' light.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

After that I felt wonderfully free and relieved. Quite early, in happy anticipation of what was coming, I started on the journey home.

### DIARY

*5th November, 1915. At Home.*—Arrived at the station at eight o'clock, then straight home. I am full of inexpressible feelings of joy and gratitude. For a long time it all seemed like a dream. Then I went to sleep, tired, blissful and happy, to awake the next day in my own home at last.

### DIARY

*6th-9th November. At Home.*—At home. I tasted all the blissful joys of reawakened memories, delighted in familiar nooks and corners, went through the woods again, where I had first seen Pan, seen Hippolyta, and every bend was a reminder of a conversation, a poem, a friend, or an idea. And then in the house and garden, where everything was as lovely as it used to be. And how happy were we three together ! What a joy it was to look at things with quite different eyes and to discover with astonishment that in a year of separation we had not grown apart at all.

I did not read much. The 6th and 7th Cantos of the *Odyssey* were, if possible, still more divine in the shining beauty of their flowing language ; the poems of George, whose language and art seem to me quite inevitable. He himself is, in the realm of poetry,

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

like the John the Baptist of a yet slumbering Christ. I was pleased to see that my gods of former times have not paled, but gleamed resplendent as of yore. Though a new life has taught me many new things and made much appear in a different light, I think what gave me greatest happiness was the thought of the future. But it is difficult to speak of that. We used to dream of it, we used to plan all sorts of wonders and marvels as children, yet who can tell what lies in the future ! The only thing we must do is say "yes" to her from the very beginning, and make a pact with her, which can never be broken. And never must we allow this proud feeling to become side-tracked by trivialities, which make us angry and bad.

### DIARY

1st December, 1915. *In the Field*.—I was fearfully depressed, and overwhelmed by a confused chaotic and shattering feeling ; wrote a prayer to Apollo, one of my most imploring. It began :

If my mouth now has grown too base for prayer,  
and then all I remember is :

Heroic life of flaming deeds,  
Creative life of form and law. . . .

It is curious how some things grow unconsciously and swell to giant proportions if one takes no notice at all of them for some time. Things that used to have a tremendous effect seem gradually to permeate

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

your whole system and become a part of you. That is how the glorious heritage of ancient Greece affects me.

TO HERR V. E.

7th December, 1915. *In the Field*.—Truly we Germans have passed through the seven fires of hell and have been purged by them ; we have been tried and tested, that is probably why we have reached the highest as individuals, while we have not attained, collectively speaking, the level of other peoples.

" Oh, holy heart of the people, my dear and native land."\*

TO HIS PARENTS

18th December, 1915. *In the Field*.—We may gain some idea of the enormous strength and really divine greatness of the German people when we see how, hemmed in on all sides, and amidst such a clamour of hate and rage, it has managed not only to resist, but to hold out victoriously against the enemy. When you consider the enormous achievement of our people, it must fill you with a belief in the future so overwhelming that all else fades before it. And to be able to render service to this Present, to await this Future with such intense anticipation, is perhaps the greatest blessing ever granted to man. I want to prove myself worthy of it by never looking backwards, by never nursing any cowardly yearnings, but marching onwards and having faith. That age-old trinity, Faith, Love and Hope, which may have lain

\* Quotation from Hölderlin. [Tr. Note.]

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

even in the dance of the Graces, indeed guides us and leads us to-day.

### TO HIS PARENTS

19th December, 1915. *In the Field*.—The task of those at home seems to me to be that of preserving the continuity of civilisation, of keeping it strong and alive, and of guiding those thousands of people who have been torn away from the past and return home, not thinking of the future, but only caring for the present; of guiding them back to the blessings of a new peace, and, more than all, of preparing the way for it by their very existence, their deeds and their thoughts. Even if we do not know when peace will come, come one day it will, and the future will belong not to the victorious or defeated nation, but to that one which will know how to turn the new era into one of peace and which will remain victorious in the conflicts of peace-time.

### DIARY

1st January, 1916 :

Oh, Radiant Year, in armour clad,  
Thou dost arise,  
The promise of new wonders bright and glad  
Is in thine eyes.

Whate'er thou bringest—we receive,  
We make nor mourning nor debate :  
But help us, help us ! We believe,  
But help us to achieve our fate.



## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

Thou, above years and fates, art just !  
I will not plead for peace.  
We wait before thine iron ' Must '   
Until release.

I greet thee : thou art life or death,  
And work and sorrow :  
But I have faith in my soul's breath,  
And in To-morrow.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*8th January, 1916. In the Field.*—I have come more and more to the conclusion that everything one calls " religious absorption," " awakening consciousness of God," etc., is nothing but weakness, cowardice, flight. It is not difficult, under terrific shell-fire, after sudden attacks, or during other dangers of war, to cling to God as a last hope, and even if it is pardonable (I am myself not quite free from blame), it is still nothing more than a manifestation of the instinct of self-preservation—of the Psyche in fear of death. On the other hand, it is very difficult for the man who is not conventionally religious, *i.e.*, the man who is not at home in the outward forms of religion, to rise on the outspread wings of happiness, and when he is full of great gladness, send up a prayer of thanksgiving ; which in any case is a higher form and more " pleasing to God " than the sombre prayer of entreaty. As Nietzsche says : " Joy is deeper than sorrow," but also : " Is it possible that this old saint in his wood has not yet

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had tidings of the death of God ? ” And this we must never forget. So far as I can see, we could do no more perilous thing than turn suddenly against the whole pre-war period with a romantic gesture—which incidentally would be completely misunderstood. This is what would happen if, in failing to realise what it is that we are in need of, we set up nothing but a new antithesis against the big antithesis the modern world has produced, and followed the lamentable example set by the peerless circle of German Romantics, by taking refuge—to the harm of German civilisation—in Christendom, Conservatism, and the like. We are aware of the unhealthy gloom which followed on after the first glorious burst of exultation, and one of our most difficult tasks is to safeguard ourselves from it. The coming age must be a synthetic one ; its whole character must be positive and constructive, creating new forms and furthering the organic growth of old ones. But there is no greater danger, and therefore none which must be more rigidly guarded against, than that of solving the difficulty by retaining old and returning to obsolete but still existent forms. The tremendous energy and magnificent impetuosity of a rich, stirring and striving age, extending over several decades, would be utterly destroyed. I am deeply convinced that great things are hidden in the lap of the future, and it would be disastrous if we allowed stupid twaddle like that about re-awakening religiosity to make us

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

less receptive to the meaning of the new-awakening forces. I call it a most mischievous and infernal assumption that an age born under the influence of socialism and Nietzsche, in the terrific social, political and cultural revolutions of the end of the century, could ever return to the calm waters of a State-guaranteed Christianity. I am as decided a non-Christian as ever.

### TO HIS PARENTS

18th January, 1916. *In the Field*.—Yesterday I read *Faust* again. What a relief after the heat and struggle of the day to get back to eternal things!

### TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

30th January, 1916. *In the Field*.—Latterly I have been looking a good deal into the world of Ancient Greece; it is ever the fountain from which we draw, the ocean into which we plunge, the most perfect embodiment of the European ideal. Not only were the Greeks not good, not only were they "more unhappy than we might think" (Boeckh), but in their impulses and many other things they were often both mischievous and violent. Nevertheless, so long as the gods exist, it will never be denied that they produced matchless works of art and the greatest ideals that have ever been conceived. This conviction grows on me.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

2nd February, 1916.—Towards 1 a.m. singing “*Muss i denn, muss i denn*,” to the trenches. I have a section of about 500 yards, a detachment of forty good fellows, and an urgent desire to learn as much as I possibly can.

### TO HIS PARENTS

3rd February, 1916. *In the Field*.—I met some old old comrades of the advance; they shook hands most warmly. But I am even more pleased by my men. I chanced to hear an *Oberjager*,\* whom I had, well, not exactly cursed, but spoken to rather sharply—you know my way—say to another: “As long as Lieut. Braun is in command I shall go everywhere with him.” I suppose you cannot know how glad a remark like that makes one, but so it is. When all is said and done, it cannot be denied that leadership is *the* profession. I can’t tell you how much I am learning here.

### TO HIS FRIEND, OTTO G.

18th February, 1916. *In the Field*.—I am reading Goethe and Hölderlin. They have become indispensable, and keep on giving me new strength and freshness. I think one’s chief duty is to prepare for a long duration of the war in such a way that your whole mental outlook becomes different from what

\* Rank in the German Army between N.C.O. and officer. [*Tr. Note.*]

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

it would be if you regarded it all as merely a passing thing. Who can foresee when this superhuman struggle will be over? We cannot picture to ourselves what dimensions it may yet assume, and more, what shape the world will have afterwards. Sometimes you worry about this till you nearly go mad, but one has just got to carry one's head high, and hold fast to a faith in the future.

### DIARY

28th February, 1916.—Very interesting patrol duty at night. Under a clear starry sky crawled slowly forward on soft new-fallen snow straight across the Servetsch Valley to within about 80 yards of the Russians. Finally, we got to a perfectly smooth surface of ice that might have broken any moment; there was no cover, and above us only the clear sky, which was in addition incessantly lit up with Vêry lights. It was rather a risky affair, for the Russians shot each time the ice cracked. At such times I am always pleased at my composure. However nervous and frightened my fancies may make me at other times, however quickly my heart beats, as soon as the danger is real I am completely self-possessed, and even cheerful. Afterwards, I read Nietzsche's *Gotzendämmerung* till 2.30 a.m., waxing more and more enthusiastic over it. Though occasionally he has quite missed the point, for the most part it is unique—sublime.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### TO HIS PARENTS

26th February, 1916. *In the Field*.—In all the confusion and clouding of one's inner and outer life, the one unshakeable and fundamental fact remains and always will remain: we three belong together, and no estrangement is possible, and an absence even of years can make no difference.

### TO HIS PARENTS

5th March, 1916. *In the Field*.—Sometimes I seem to have become such a stranger to my times that I feel quite afraid. Things people at home think of as new, great, or modern, seem to me empty, long done with, coarse, to be laughed at if one did not feel more like weeping. What an abyss will yawn before us, what a conflict will ensue in the whole of modern development, when we, who have been dreaming of great, pure and powerful things out here, come in contact with these evidences of the "German Spirit."

My future is quite hidden, and I am not trying forcibly to rend the veil apart. I do not know what I am going to do after the war, mainly because no one knows what things will be like then. But as I am now in the war, I am trying to make myself as efficient at my work as I can.

### TO HIS PARENTS

9th March, 1916.—I read some of Usener's excellent writings and am very much struck by them.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

He has one marvellous essay on the Platonic Academy, containing constant references to our cultural life; it is all characterised by a most fascinating breadth of outlook, and an extraordinarily wide command of a very varied range of subjects, especially of German folk-lore.

### TO HIS PARENTS

29th March, 1916.—You may say that it is often of no advantage to have an historical sense. But I am sure that even great men of action, statesmen and soldiers, princes and artists, had a good deal of it—or, of what might better be called historical *tact*—and I think it is practically always indispensable. It is just a lack of this historical sense—which may be fraught with real danger to the immature—that would disgust and revolt one in Nietzsche, were it not that his sublime genius protects him from such criticism. I do not know how to explain it, as no one has a more profound or surprising insight into nations and epochs than Nietzsche (though, 'tis true, only into those that are akin to him, which in a sense, he can interpret by reference to himself or to his own ideals); at any rate, generally he has this defect. Most of the offensive and rather pointless passages in his writings can be traced to it. It is certainly showing a lack of this historical sense when in the midst of his objections to Christianity (based upon very profound insight) he endeavours to scold it,

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like he would a schoolboy who has stolen nuts, for having destroyed the Ancient World ; and he metes out similar treatment to the Reformation. It also shows what a very relativistic age his was : he never gives a thought to objective "wrong" and "right." Of course, this by no means excuses his judgments about Dante ("the hyæna that writes poetry in graves"—one can only laugh at it !), about Socrates, which, though contradictory, is fundamentally wrong, about the Sophist movement, about the Germans (which is probably psychologically explicable but is mischievous on account of its intentional dishonesty of thought), about Plato, the State, legislation, and so on. At the same time he does say some extraordinarily good things ; every single one is a germ from which may spring an entirely new view of the matter under discussion, of the Greeks and all to do with Greece, Goethe, Napoleon, and many others. But taken altogether, he lacks the thing that Borchardt speaks of so beautifully in *The Hesperus* : "The serene mind open to all things, great or small, that becomes like God by re-creating the world of God." "Welcome ye good and evil!" was the almost Goethe-like beginning of a lost poem by Walther (von der Vogelweide), four words that contain in themselves the zenith reached by German poetry as true world wisdom (page 70). Here you see what I call "historical sense," carried to its highest point and I believe justly described as something akin to the German ideal. . . .



## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

That feeling of mine which, even before the war, as you know, sought always to give form and shape to things, has, if anything, become even stronger than before. My love for perfect achievement and creation in art and nature, for all that blossoms and grows organically, and for the mighty passion which has become moulded to perfect form and cast in metal, for the classical and symmetrical, has grown yet more strong, and so has my dislike of all that is accidental, artificial and arbitrary, all that is merely negative, verbose and disconnected, that just touches the fringes where it should get to the centre, all turbulence as opposed to conscious creation and evolution.

I have piled up these conceptions, not so that you may analyse them one by one, but to make you realise the whole of what I mean. I think you will understand me. I hate everything that is formless, from the smallest of everyday things to the very highest. Therefore, it is of no use to offer merely destructive criticism ; one must provide something new in its stead. "Only when we are creative can we destroy," it says in the *Gaya Scienza*.

My deepest desire, my purest if most secret flame, my most profound faith and greatest hopes are still centred on the same thing ; everything for me is included in the State. After all, the aim and object of all my striving is some day to build the State, to build it as a temple, reaching upwards in purity, resting on its own strength, austere and majestic, but

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gay as the gods are gay, with bright halls glittering in the sunlight. Do not think that I am speaking lightly ; I know what all this means, but somewhere above the mist one must be able to see the top of a mountain, even if thick clouds veil the abysses which lie before it.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*4th April, 1916.*—How glorious it must be in Germany now ! We are having very fine weather ; hot sun, larks singing. I always think of how delightfully we shall spend the time of my leave. What a lot we shall have to talk about ! I have got such an enormous amount on my mind ! . . . I want to read Clausewitz now, and books on military and technical matters, of which I know very little.

### TO HIS PARENTS

*9th April, 1916.*—I am like one whose birthright is being squandered while he travels about in foreign lands. What I consider more important than anything else is to see the spirit and culture of our people growing and receiving expression in mature and beautiful works, and it seems ever more improbable that we shall see the young people of our age carrying out for all eternity in their highest, even though it be a hidden form, the legacy of these times. Show me one singer, one single creative artist or constructive worker, among all these silly boys, and I will say that the whole Gomorrah is justified. But wherever

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

you look you find superficiality and stupidity. Where anything is achieved, where good books, or great books, are being written and great things are being uttered, you will find it is by people of thirty, forty, fifty or sixty years of age. But we want the "great man" not only to be a contemporary but a man of our own age. The only thing that can be of any avail against the intellectual slough of my generation is active participation in what is present and near at hand and an eye looking boldly to the future,

### DIARY

16th May, 1916.—To-morrow I go on leave, hooray!

### DIARY

21st May, 1916. *At Home*.—At bottom there are in human life two ideals, corresponding to two arch types: the hero, who represents the active life, and the saint, who represents the life of contemplation; and in the latter class the poet and the sage may be included. I do not accept any intermediate stages between these two ideals, and mine is entirely the hero. But what does that mean expressed in the language of to-day? Statesman? Yes; but that remains a mere phrase unless we actually see him. Can it be the politician who once used to correspond to the "hero," but now is a name with which is associated so much that is pitiable and petty-

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

bourgeois, stupid and quarrelsome? Or is it the officer or diplomat, or any other accepted type; professionals who never achieve greatness? There is only an unsatisfactory, confused solution. If I cannot fit into any of the types of my age, it will pass me by and leave me behind, and when the great war is over, it will pursue its course without me. Yet even that is not to be. If I cannot adapt my will to my age then the age must adapt itself to my will, and I shall become what I am. This is not the utterance of titanic caprice, not an attack inspired by hate against the laws of the universe, but rather a humble and obedient acceptance of the commands of that sublime *Daimon*, which I hope and trust is within me, and which I pray may lead me through all danger, may sustain me, steel my resolution, and guide me, so that I may not become a mere destroyer but the beginning and dawn of a newly-shaping world. As I sang at the beginning of 1916, so I sing to-day to this *Daimon*:

But I have faith in my soul's breath;  
And in to-morrow.

## DIARY

24th May, 1916.—Read a good deal. Much that was excellent in Schlieffen. Charming poems of Möricke, Catullus, Hofmannsthal, George. Yesterday only Goethe and Shakespeare.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

### DIARY

28th May, 1916. *At Home.*—What a lot of good we, mentally starved as we are at the front, get from these talks. Altogether home has the same effect on me as a fountain of eternal youth. I am now well and strong and happy again, and prepared for anything.

### DIARY

6th June, 1916. *At Home.*—Alas, to-day I leave again. Never before has home been so glorious!

### DIARY

14th June, 1916. *In the Field.*—Towards nine o'clock received the following telegram: "By order of the Army Division Woyrsch the 21st Reserve Rifles join up with the *Beskidenkorps*."\* So after eleven we started off in a southerly direction. It was a very beautiful, misty night; but the marching did get tiring after a time.

### DIARY

18th June, 1916. *Whit-Sunday.*—Hot sunshine. Church parade and service awful! You can only flee from the silly talk of this libertine priest—I would like to say worlds away from any real culture or religion—by getting into a brighter world—that of Antiquity. I read Winckelmann's

\* An Austrian corps. [*Tr. Note.*]

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

shorter writings and am quite charmed by this great man's extraordinary purity and singleness of mind. His whole inimical attitude towards the Baroque, which is compressed into such glowing fury against Bernini, is so marvellous and affecting, and in its historic inevitability so beautiful a thing, that one should not object even when he refers us to a colourless classical style. Some passages are really of incomparable beauty and bear that stamp of the absolute and unconditional which only the very best achieves.

### DIARY

*27th June, 1916. Birthday.*—My comrades gave me a lovely basket of sunflowers, the *Oberjager* one too, and Boye yet another. Gorgeous sunshine. In the afternoon we were modestly celebrating the occasion in a beautiful wood when the sudden command came: "Chasseurs advance immediately." After a lot of rushing to and fro we started off, were received at midnight by a corporal of the 81st Austrian Regiment and camped here in the little wood north of Norosjolki. Will the whole year be as glorious as this, an advance in to the new, the unknown?

### TO JULIE V.

*29th June, 1916. In the Field.*—It seems that the highest achievement in painting comes in different periods from that in sculpture because the funda-

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

mental tendencies of these two forms of art are contradictory. Perhaps the pinnacle of painting can never be reached in the classic style. However, I do not think it impossible that our northern eyes play us tricks in this. Possibly the spirit of painting lies outside the classical, and is purely Dionysian. You know that wonderful *Table of the Pythagoreans* with the ten self-contradictory categories; could one not add the expression of "sculptural-painting?" But I do not want to say more about this as I have not thought it out enough.

### DIARY

*3rd July, 1916.*—At ten o'clock we got the order to join the Austrians. The Russians were supposed to have broken through, and we were to hold the line till five o'clock, when reinforcements were to come. The Austrian artillery had shot its last shell. There was no question of storming the place; it was already designated a "great achievement of the company" to have held the miserable second line, simple trenches without dug-outs or communication trenches.

### DIARY

*4th July, 1916.*—We are in a most unfavourable position at the foot of a hill occupied by Russians. At 2 p.m. firing had been continuous for sixty hours. It was a terrific night, with a great storm raging, Very lights going up continuously, while search-

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lights and whistling shells made it almost as light as day.

### DIARY

6th July, 1916.—One sometimes comes across people who are quite done for. Just now there passed a *Gefreiter* \* who obviously has St. Vitus' Dance, while the night before last, an Austrain platoon commander came running like mad and shouting: "The Russians, the Russians are coming!" Then he was gone. You have to be one of those *naïf* and arrogant "staff-wallahs" who have never been in the front trenches, to condemn these people.

### TO HIS PARENTS

6th July, 1916. *In the Field.*—The worst of the first day was that we had to stand the whole concentrated Russian fire without being able to retaliate in any way. When suddenly, like the prince in the fairy tale, just during the worst rain of shells, two young officers in the F.A. came along and said that they had just arrived with their 5.9 battery and wanted to shoot, but they had no idea what was going on. We quickly told them, and in ten minutes the first purring shells whistled over our heads, like joy bells for us . . . The night before last we had been alarmed by an absurd rumour that the Russians

\* A rank in the German Army between private and N.C.O. [*Tr. Note.*]



## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

had suddenly advanced, on a pitch black night, and we pressed forward over the fields in open formation. Suddenly, as if it were a signal, night turned into day. A most terrific storm burst. You did not merely hear thunder, but there were incessant flashes of lightning, and each flash bathed everything in magic light. At the same moment hell broke loose in front, hissing shells burst everywhere in flames, and, in addition, a continuous shower of Vêry lights and the rays of searchlights sought to penetrate the rain. It was an indescribably mad and riotous hour.

### DIARY

*9th July, 1916.*—We had a number of casualties : first and foremost, Boye, that fine lad, fell, a bullet from his shoulder to his stomach. I was with him just now ; I closed his eyes, took his faithful hand once more, and now all's over. In the night a terrific storm, our holes filled over and over again ; occasionally we got quite desperate. So long as one can keep good-humoured !

### DIARY

*10th July, 1916.*—What a lot a man can stand ! Boye had a very beautiful death. One platoon had suddenly retired, when the command was given : "Third Company, advance," Boye ran to the company, shouting, "Forward !" At that moment shrapnel burst on the ground and a bullet entered

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his body just above his heart. He fell without a word.

This morning a N.C.O. ,whom I only know slightly, came with a box of fresh, beautiful roses. Was I not a friend of Lieut. Boye? He had had these roses sent last night; would I put them on his grave?

Some of the men are quite exhausted, on the point of breaking up altogether, and some are already down and out, *e.g.*, the crew of one machine gun that got three direct hits one after the other. Nobody was wounded, but the men are finished, staggering about, screaming, and so on. In some spots the emplacement is totally shot away; a concrete platform and one dugout covered with eight layers of wood held, but nothing else. The Russians came in here, there are corpses everywhere, most of which, black as coal, make an awful stench in the hot mid-day sun. There is one picture I shall never forget: in a wood in which every stump was shot away lay a Russian, a German, and another Russian; all of them with expressions of most terrible fury on their faces; the German with his bayonet fiercely clutched in his hand, his left clenched above his head, and beneath his heart the deep wound of a three-edged Russian bayonet.

TO JULIE V.

11th July, 1916. *In the Field.*—I have borne many things out here, and I shall have a lot more to

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

bear. I really think I can say of myself: "What does not destroy me, strengthens me." Without sign of emotion I carried my good friend Boye to the grave yesterday and many another fine chasseur; our losses do not happen in the ever-recurring heat and excitement of open fights, but exclusively under soul-destroying, monotonous artillery fire that lasts for hours; I have learnt to put even the most unpleasant situation out of mind. But I and all of us can only do that because we have an inexhaustible source of joy and strength and love behind us at home. . . .

The whole battalion has now dug itself in, and in these dug-outs we let the artillery fire go on above our heads. It certainly is no pleasure, especially when, during a storm, they run full of water and one does not know where to go. But we have managed to survive it, and rest assured that I for one not only always float on top, but usually take quite a lot of down-hearted ones with me. Please do not show this letter to mother and father. I am writing to mother too, and will pretend that I have not written to you at all.

### TO HIS PARENTS

16th July, 1916. *In the Field*.—As I see how strong you are, even in the face of such bad news as that of the death of my dear Boye, I am giving up my original plan of only writing you short cards and will tell you how the whole thing happened. . . . Above all I

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must mention our men, who really are beyond all praise. It was marvellous to see the M.C. men tearing about, under heavy fire, here, there, and everywhere, with never a word of failing courage, joking occasionally, and proud of being able to help the men. There was hardly a word of complaint from the wounded, just calmness and understanding. There are some things out here in the filth and the beastliness that are finer and more wonderful than many of the works of peace.

### TO HIS PARENTS

20th July, 1916. *In the Field*.—I admit freely that I was rather overwrought. Boye's death, bursting shells all around, hardly any sleep, damp and rain. But you understand and will forgive me. Heaven knows that there are times when you have got to keep a damn good grip of yourself. Almost the worst happened yesterday, when our own artillery shot into our trenches in an utterly ghastly fashion. . . . The only thing to do is to keep one's composure, one's balance and *morale*. One must never lose the last, but it is very difficult sometimes to retain the first. I always think of the lines :

" In labour and peril, if we endure and stand fast,  
Each day shall end in victory at last."

I will not prove unworthy of you, nor untrue to myself, and I will remain steadfast, come what may.

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

TO JULIE V.

25th July, 1916. *In the Field*.—Attic sculpture ! It makes me quite wistful when I remember the "delicate sound and speech of Attic tongue." It will be some time before I can concentrate on these things again.

### DIARY

28th July, 1916.—It was interesting to hear the latest reinforcements, wounded folk from Verdun, say : "Far rather back to Verdun than here. There at least we had relief, rest billets, bomb proof cover for reserves, but here there's nothing. As much firing on the rest billets as in the front line ! " It is marvellous to see how our men stand it all.

### DIARY

7th August, 1916.—In the morning a telegram from home : "Mother very ill, come at once." Straight to the O.C., got leave. Rode to Baranowitschi ; left midnight.

### DIARY

8th August, 1916. En route. In Warsaw a cable : "Hope of recovery." In Thorn : "Regret mother's condition much worse." Arrived Berlin 12 at night. Father at the station. All over.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

*9th August, 1916. At Home.*—Mother had never been so happy, never so full of hope, as in those last few days. She was full of eagerness to work, happy, cheerful and calm. There she lies, dignified and majestic, beautiful and serene as Demeter, Queen of Heaven, whom she so loved. I don't know what I am to do. My life is changed . . . Everything seems gone—destroyed. But I am so despairing that I cannot even shed tears. No one can know how much I feel it. It is a comfort to know that she was so happy beforehand, that she died in the fullness of life, without any forebodings. In her will of March 5th, 1916, she is very, very depressed, melancholy, and full of evil presentiments.

There are Russian attacks at Skrobowa again. One terribly cruel thought will not leave my mind: that she died for me, sacrificed herself for me, that I would have fallen on one of these days. I cannot shake off this thought, and it imposes the most solemn duties upon me.

Julie is a wonderful comfort; in her last letter accompanying her will, mother says that I should always confide in her who was her only and dearest friend. What is to happen now? I cannot tell. Everything seems so empty and shallow and unimportant—it is all so aimless. May the gods, who have taken almost everything from me, grant me one boon: to survive the war and live to carry out

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her desires. Because she would have it so I will live after the war, she will watch me from above, and perhaps will guide me too. I could not bear it if I did not believe this.

### DIARY

12th August, 1916. *At Home.*—I realise now that in spite of great sorrows, mother's life was full of delight and great joy.

We took her to the Crematorium to-day. A simple funeral service conducted in silence: Pa, Julie and I; and they played a few passages from the St. Matthew Passion, of which she was so fond.

Afterwards to the new goddess in the old museum. In the evening came the news that Brennfleck had fallen—my presentiment! " Terrible shock.

### TO JULIE V.

1st September, 1916. *In the Field.*—To-day when we seem to some extent to be face to face with Destiny, when we imagined that we had already passed the height of the crisis in the first week of the Battle of the Somme and by our defence of the Stochod line, it bursts forth anew in a more awful form, when there is not the slightest indication of its terrible fury abating; when we must apparently look on with equanimity while Greece is helplessly whirled into Charybdis, and at many other catastrophes; in face of all this, the only thing to do is to say nothing, clench our teeth, and watch the enemy.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

TO JULIE V.

19th September, 1916.—In spite of a few rainy days the weather has turned out fine again. One result of this is my photographs, and I am sending you the whole lot. The ones of King Sobieski's castle will interest you most. I have never seen quite such crude Baroque as in the church there. Its insertion into the general architectural scheme is excellent, as always, and quite successful. I am enclosing a hasty sketch of the ground plan drawn from memory, in order to make the whole construction and scheme a little clearer. What strikes you about the church is the hopeless disunity of the architecture; the porch, rarely found attached to a circular building, projects above the structure and includes the beams on both sides. Inside, the church has the effect of a tower; it is oval, abnormally narrow and high, but with excellent acoustics.

TO ATHA N.

26th September, 1916. *In the Field*.—Some of my best people have been killed the last few days. And if you imagine the often heart-breaking letters of their relatives, whose only breadwinner, father of a family, or son, has been killed, you can realise the awful pictures. But what are we to do? Unshakeable faith, bright and confident in life and the future, keeps us going. All we can do is, never look backwards, or think of the past, or lose ourselves in



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purposeless, aimless longing. This is true for everybody, for me more than any. Even if we are involved in heavy fighting again in the near future, as is to be expected, I will not give up this faith.

TO JULIE V.

29th September, 1916. *In the Field*.—At present I am speeding full steam ahead through Treitschke. It is a wonderfully harmonious work, born out of one central concept, great even when its judgments of values are grotesque, untrue and incorrect. You must drink him at one draught, let his rich influence permeate you. It is not a book for the learned observer.

TO JULIE V.

9th October, 1916. *In the Field*.—It is really only the small things that become difficult out here, because they seem trivial and, therefore, annoying. If we all, including myself, who, I may say, have to bear a double burden, had not learnt to regard all these ghastly things that pile up before our eyes, as a matter of course, I might even say as a duty, gladly borne, then its overwhelming influence would long ago have crushed us completely.

The glorious sense of fighting in defence of one's mother country is usually combined with a little of the spirit of the *lansquenets*; entirely without this, I suppose no war can be fought. Of myself I can say with truth, that I should feel entirely in the

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

right place, growing healthier and stronger in soul and body, were it not for this shadow that lies heavily upon me.

### TO HIS FATHER

10th October, 1916. *In the Field*.—How important it is in these times for minds to collaborate in arriving at well-thought-out, calm, judgments, or constructive ideas; at this time when such utter confusion and hopeless chaos is becoming more and more apparent on all sides in political life. But where shall we find a new fixed point which will form a centre of support in this ever-whirling circle? The only thing to do is for each to contribute in detail to the work of reconstruction. And nothing is of greater importance from this standpoint than to get the Government to reform the Prussian electoral law.

### TO HIS FATHER

14th October, 1916. *In the Field*.—Yesterday I read a lot of Friedjung<sup>22</sup> again; his wonderfully vivid descriptions of even the most intricate diplomatic and military procedure keep me breathless with interest. *The Ploughman from Bohemia* I am saving up for an hour of real peace.

### TO HIS FATHER

28th October, 1916. *In the Field*.—Alas, I have finished Volume I of this gorgeous Friedjung, and the second is in my trunk at the base. As Goethe

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and Meinecke " have been filched from me for a few days by friends who were hungering for something to read, and as I finished that marvellous book, *The Ploughman from Bohemia*, yesterday (I found it entrancing), I have started on Schlieffen's *Cannæ*. This is obviously a very great book and works out the idea of a war of annihilation right through history, with an amazing disregard of everything else. The extraordinary simplicity of the style is so marvellous, a style characterised none-the-less by minute attention to detail ; there is not a single superfluous word, not a sentence which one ought not to read twice over if one is to get the exact meaning. I know no book that packs more meaning into so few words, unless it be *Cæsar*. He, too, can afford, with an audacity permissible only to genius, to dispense with all ornamental additions.

### TO HIS FATHER

24th October, 1916.—Yesterday we got the news of the murder of Stürgkh by Fritz Adler.<sup>14</sup> Even if it is a deliverance, perhaps the only deliverance for this unhappy brother-empire of ours, overwhelmed by internecine conflicts as it is (and for a long time the only question at issue among Austrian officers has been whether Stürgkh was more a fool or a knave) I was yet greatly shocked when I heard who had committed the murder. Was it a conscious sacrifice and therefore heroic, or was it a nihilistic act of madness ? Will the veil be torn from the eyes of

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those leading men of the monarchy, now so obviously wrapped in tragic blindness, but whose *bona fides* one cannot ever question, and will they at last tread the new path which, even if not to-day, will have to be chosen one day and trod with unimaginable cruelty, amidst blood and battle? . . . The terrific mass of problems from which the war has pitilessly torn the veil rises before me again, and it is almost as if new mountains kept bursting forth from the volcanic womb of the earth. But the little people of to-day seem as if they have drawn a hedgerow and put a tablet before it on which is written: "No road," hoping that the toppling avalanches will turn about.

The tragedy of this war seems almost to be swallowed up in the tragedy of the whole era, and yet I feel a faint suspicion that the latter will solve and transfigure the former, and perhaps in the last resort turn out to be its salvation. Thus out of all this chaos body and form will be moulded in the breath of this war, and once more a god will arise.

## DIARY

29th October, 1916.—The future looks so drab, so joyless, just a void. Sometimes I ask myself why I do not court death; it would be the best thing; but the thought of Father keeps me going. He would not be able to bear life any more. And perhaps he only bears it now because he thinks the same of me. And he is right there. . . .

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TO HERR V E.

29th October, 1916. *In the Field*.—It is not true to say that great things are only born in unhappiness. They are born in pain, in torment, maybe, above all, in conflict, but *in spite of* pain, in spite of torment, in spite of conflict. Out of the struggle with these comes that seriousness, that gravity which all great things have; they lose anything sybaritic which otherwise might have clung to them. In short, greatness makes all else yield before it; the world always serves the gods even when it seems to be at war with them. The true nourishing seed-bed from which all growth and development springs is the glowing heat of the sun, the prodigal exuberance of an almost tropical summer, the young warrior-like beauty of flowering springtime; in an unforgettable passage in the Dido book of the *Æneid*, Apollo is once described as the God of Spring, striding along with wreaths in his hair, glittering in shining armour.

Thus I live and feast on the divine abundance and the Eden-like sunshine of those years that have vanished and vanished for ever. Perhaps there was a reckless wantonness in my life that made its first chords strike such exceptionally happy harmonies, and now I have to atone for it. And should one not say in spite of it all: *amor fati*? It would certainly be true of my mother. She did not die young, as those the gods love are supposed to, but in the very

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fullness and bloom of life and with hope overflowing  
She belonged to those people who become more  
glorious and perfect the older they get, the more  
filled with divine inspiration ; not like the majority  
of people, in whom that breath of the gods, which  
each one of us brings from heaven, is dimly felt only  
on very rare occasions, in the fire of their youth.

### TO JULIE V.

1st November, 1918. *In the Field*.—I have finished  
the first part of the Gundolf *Goethe* up to and  
including *Wit and Satire*. Although there is much  
that is very beautiful and splendid and highly  
significant, yet I must say that I have some mis-  
givings about it. There is such an exaggerated  
abstraction and desire for theoretical speculation,  
disagreeably noticeable in the Introduction, in the  
first chapter (which has quite failed to achieve its  
object) and in several other passages. You get to a  
point where you cannot help saying to yourself that  
here Goethe is merely being used as material for the  
reflections and theories of Gundolf, expounded till  
one is completely bored. In spite of a great deal  
that is excellent there frequently obtrudes a certain  
didactic vanity that cannot get beyond itself and  
its purely formal dialectical concepts (e.g., p. 25, the  
contrast between Goethe's and Dante's world). This  
comes as a shock in the section on *Wit and Satire*,  
too. Can humour ever have been discussed with  
less humour, or the ways of children with less under-

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standing of children, than in his first chapter? Really, when I had finished it, although I was quite captivated (as I always am) by Gundolf's exceptional gifts, by his many excellent remarks and details, such as those about Goethe's heathendom, p. 40, Goethe's objectivity, p. 48, and other fundamental and methodical expositions in the Introduction, yet, on the other hand, I was utterly amazed and bewildered by his decline from *Shakspeare*, by the false path of theorising and dogmatism which he follows. There all is sparkling sensuousness, life for life's sake, an unfolding which holds you spell-bound as it runs its course. Here in the *Goethe* you often get very good, even capital theory, but it's always theory first, Gundolf in the forefront: thus and thus it is, and then following on, as it were, by way of example—Goethe. I felt that to get away from this, Gundolf should write some quite simple biography. But, of course, the chapters after this are quite different, what was oppressively boring vanishes, and particularly in his investigations on poetry, Gundolf rises to a height, to a beauty of exposition, such as you may seek for in vain in the whole of German literary history. I feel that in such pages as 68 *et seq.*, about the Leipzig Song-book, and 100 *et seq.*, about the Strassburg Lyric, he has said the last word there is to say in the matter. And there is a lot more that is very good here. I have dwelt particularly on his deficiencies because I am sure we are agreed as to his achievements, and I

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only wanted to express my disappointment that a mind so richly endowed can get lost in such trivial by-paths. . . .

I do not want to deny when writing to you that I am often sick at heart ; but, as far as I am concerned, I can pull through. No one need be anxious about me, nothing can keep me down, but I am unhappy about Father because he seems to be worrying himself to death on my account.

### TO HIS FATHER

1st November, 1916. *In the Field*.—I do not want to come on leave yet, even if the separation is very difficult for us both. We must bear it a little longer ; an early too early return would only tear open the wound again. I get very depressed myself, but don't be anxious, I am bearing up, and if I come in January we shall be more controlled and be able to discuss the future more calmly. But, do believe me, I shall be fresher and happier then than I could possibly be now, and I shall be able to cheer you up as well. Don't try to *corriger la fortune* ; I have an instinctive fear of that and I do not believe any good comes of it. I entreat you, leave things to work out as they will. One only needs a little faith !

### TO JULIE V.

6th November, 1916. *In the Field*.—I am doing some real work, reading Friedjung, who writes with the wide sweep of an epic poet, vividly but with



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the restrained dignity of the singer, who, with all his own experience behind him, warns the coming generation. Rarely have I read a more interesting or exciting book. How poor seems the fate of individuals compared to that of peoples, and how dull a novel in comparison with history !

### TO HIS FATHER

11th November, 1916. *Telegram from the Field.*—Lightly wounded in left forearm, at present war hospital 57 Lemberg. Will wire as soon as I get to Germany. General condition satisfactory. Letter follows.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Military Hospital, Lemberg, 14th November, 1916.*—Now I must tell you how I was wounded. On the 11th, towards 5 o'clock, I was just beginning to write you a letter when the Russians attacked us repeatedly with machine-gun fire. We were right in the line of fire and I got a hit on my left forearm as if with an iron rod ; it knocked me down. In falling I must have got the shot in my face ; it went in just above the jaw and out just under the eye, without touching my mouth, a piece of exceptional good luck. At first, as I lay there, I was quite confused, and discovered that I had been hit without believing it. I went to the base and got bandaged ; I was bleeding like a wounded wild pig, my coat and trousers were covered with blood and my arm hurt

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

very much, but I did not lose consciousness. Then they gave me morphia, which didn't help much. The way they all looked after me was touching, the men were quite speechless. N. almost cried as I was driven away next day, accompanied by Dr. T., and I nearly did too. One does not realise how attached one is to the company.<sup>55</sup> I am getting on all right now, they are not sure yet whether the nerve is lacerated or only strained. My fingers are still stiff, and it hurts a good deal, but I can manage.

### TO LIEUT. N.

*War Hospital, Lemberg, 17th November, 1916.*—You would not believe how every day of being away from the battalion gets harder to bear. This cursed "home-sickness"! It is almost true to say that in a war most of one's love for one's home is transferred to the company to which one belongs.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Hospital, Trebnitz.*—These inartistic and dull verses are for you, Father, for November 28rd, 1916.<sup>56</sup> They may give you some pleasure on account of their content :

#### CONSOLATION

Now thou art in the gods' abode,  
Fulfilled and smiling, oh, mine own !  
Forgotten earth's dull realm, the load  
Of grief, like mist, beneath thy throne.

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I will not weep, tears grieve the dead,  
But still I question ceaselessly,  
What wrathful tyrant doomed thy head,  
And what destroyer murdered thee ?

Or wert thou tired and satiated  
With fifty years of grief and mirth ?  
Nought did they spare thee ; full fed  
Thy soul with all the fruits of earth.

So thou didst wish after such tense  
Full life a summer spell of sleep ?  
Smiling and swift thou didst go hence,  
Where meadow grass and flowers grow deep.

I will not weep, though pangs are sore ;  
We are alone, the world is cold ;  
Anguish and hardship ours, no more  
The peerless voice we loved of old

Shall whisper consolation sweet !  
Therefore, oh, goddess—such thou art,  
Though heaven open to thy feet,  
Keep still our memory in thine heart !

Forget us not that linger lone,  
And in the nights of weeping wild  
Let thy love shower down upon  
Thine husband widowed and thy child.

No more in sacred kisses flowers  
The love whereby I am sanctified,  
But thou art ever wholly ours,  
And thou art ever at our side.

### TRANSFIGURATION

I cannot picture this my pain,  
Still reels my stunned and aching sense,  
For we shall never meet again,  
For thou art gone, for ever, hence.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

Still to my childish thought it seems  
That thou hast gone the sun to seek,  
That fills thine eyes with happy gleams  
And kisses colour to thy cheek.

Never shall Life know Death and live.  
Thou standest on that shore divine  
In waves of radiance, and I give  
Thee all these dreams and prayers of mine.

Mother and goddess ! Thou dost pour  
Fate's draught, and joy or testing send ;  
Give me thine hand, as oft of yore,  
And thy sweet welcome, at the end.

### CONSOLATION

Father, we are alone, and the wind croons,  
Remembering, morn and eve, its mournful song.  
Men's voices jar. And the whole summer long  
The flowers droop scentless under scorching noons.

Ah ! in our stubborn flesh our lives are still  
Prison'd. But she is ours for ever now,  
So let us consecrate in double vow  
To her, unbent, unbroken, mind and will.

She was Life's conqueror ever, proud and sure ;  
Now let her splendid spirit conquer Death.  
Through thine allotted years of lonely breath,  
Father, lean on me ! Trust me, I'll endure.

### DIARY

*Hospital, Trebnitz, 27th November, 1916.*—Read a lot of Schlieffen. A great deal became clear to me. Although he always quotes Moltke, there is a great difference between the two, less in the realisation of vital principles than in their methods of warfare ; a

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difference of taste and instinct. While Moltke prefers outflanking one enemy wing with overwhelming forces, Schlieffen is more in favour of attacks over a widely extended front. Clearness, the power of taking all in at a mere glance, is what appeals to him. This can also be seen from the fact that there are few people whose style is brighter and less forced than his; it does not lose in elegance, even when most severe.

TO LIEUT. N.

*Hospital, Berlin, 17th December, 1916.*—Just to give you the news that I was operated on yesterday. The doctor could only give a local anæsthetic as he had to keep on testing my sensibility by electrical treatment. It hurt like the dickens, though they gave me morphia, veronal, etc., several times. The doctor said the wound was much worse than he had thought. About two and a half inches of the nerve had gone and in its place a scar had formed, hard as a bone, which had to be cut out. The healthy nerve had to be split and joined up.\* I do not even wish to repeat how long the doctor said it may take to heal.

### DIARY

*Hospital, Berlin, 18th December, 1916.*—Read memoirs and letters of Gneisenau. Quite carried away by the power and greatness of this heroic man. At the same time what penetrating incisiveness of

\* "Short-circuited."

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thought ! How ignominious the little king appears beside him, and how misdrawn Treitschke's picture of him !

TO ATHA N.

*Zehlendorf, January 18th, 1917.*—I am beginning to feel better, not only as regards my hand, which is taking a very long time, but altogether. I am reading Treitschke and Meinecke, and indeed, am living almost exclusively in that marvellous period of "revolt," 1808-15. It is quite queer how I get back more and more both consciously and unconsciously to the Germanic spirit. Yet it is quite natural and fitting, for surely his own country is the place where a man is meant to do his work. It is only when the roots have gone deep into the soil of the mother-country, when, thirsty for love, they have sucked up all the moisture of their native soil, that the crown can spread without harm and let the rain and wind of distant lands play around it. I say this, convinced that nothing ever depends entirely on the complete perfection of the individual, just as it does not on the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but rather that we are all intended to serve the divine, that the meaning of our existence lies in giving shape to great things, in creating, and that it is only by this embodiment of the eternal that we can ourselves in some way continue into eternity. To put it in a somewhat heathen image : God desires to be incarnate, for that he needs man ;

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and he shows man his gratitude by lifting him into the skies and putting him among the stars.

### DIARY

*24th January, 1917. At Home.*<sup>57</sup>—Read the very valuable correspondence of Clausewitz and his wife. A lot that is fine and of considerable significance on the Reform period. Clausewitz himself appears noble and great, eminent and intellectual in the highest sense.

### DIARY

*8th February, 1917.*—Finished Treitschke's third volume in the evening. In such a great man it is a pity to find a complete failure to understand two profound problems of German history; he thinks he can dismiss them with a wave of the hand. The one is the despair that so many of the best Germans feel of their own country in those sad decades. He dismisses all these people contemptuously, and yet there is deep tragedy in Platen's phrase: "How weary I am of my own country." The other is Treitschke's lack of understanding of those repellent and ugly sides of Prussianism which, so far from being superficial, have, unfortunately, roots that go very deep. Why is it that we are not only always misunderstood, but hated, that even our most confirmed well-wishers keep on knocking up in despair against angles and corners? We are lacking in that supreme mastery of form which only an old culture can give.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

11th February, 1917.—What an incomparable pleasure it is to bathe once more in the crystal river of Hellas, the ever-beloved ! It always has the same effect of making you whole and new.

### DIARY

8th March, 1917.—In Stegemann's *History of the War*, read his account of Tannenberg. Most impressed ! For the first time I see here Schlieffen's principle carried out. No heaping up of reserves. A truly heroic confidence in the troops, which only a genius can permit himself, and which reciprocally would only be shown to a genius ; bring every man into the battle, wings widespread, unhampered, no "calamitous concentration." What complete inevitability is shown in the placing of the corps—of the 1st and of the invincible dashing 17th. To keep your head hanging over the abyss like this and yet win a victory ! Surely the highest boon ever granted to man is to gain victory on the field of battle ! Such an achievement borders on the Ultimate, and the Ancients knew what they were about when they so often raised the heroes of the battlefield into demi-gods.

### DIARY

16th March, 1917.—Ordered to the Military Section of the Foreign Office. It seems to me an interesting job.



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### DIARY

*18th May, 1917.*—In the evening read Catullus and was quite swept away. How rich, nay inspired, is the spirit which here is concentrated and moulded by deep suffering.

### DIARY

*19th May, 1917.*—News that Fritz Adler is condemned to death. Naturally that was to be expected. Of course, he will be reprieved, and I suppose after the war will be acquitted. His speeches are a marvel of moral greatness and logical thinking, greater than any that the war has brought forth. He was the only one in this obviously degenerate land of Austria who had the courage to sacrifice himself, and therefore his achievement was the more extraordinary. Was not the ultimate power which spurred him on a hidden and so more profound love of his country? The results seem to prove it. His whole fate has made the deepest impression on me.

Began the Goethe-Schiller correspondence. It is exceedingly beautiful to see how two great and yet entirely different natures here came together, quite consciously, almost intentionally, and yet out of a deep necessity and an instinctive recognition of their mutual genius. The whole has the effect of a miracle, and is moving to the point of tears. Right at the beginning a hesitating, veiled, but intense awakening of friendship, the joy of knowing each other, the

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knowledge from the first moment that now a new life was beginning. It is a curious thing, too, that Schiller is the greater giver, even though Goethe may have been carried away at first, as Catullus was, in that glorious *Song of Friendship* :—

“ Atque illinc abili tuo lepore  
Incensus, Licini, facetisque  
Ut nec miserum cibus iuaret  
Nec somnus tegeret quiete ocellos,  
Sed toto indomitus furore lecto  
Versarer cupiens videre lucem,  
Et tecum loquerer simulque ut essem.”

### DIARY

*Dresden, 25th May, 1917.*—Schiller's letters about *Wilhelm Meister*. This surely reaches the very highest point in artistic criticism. One sees Schiller at his best here, for the biggest thing that Goethe achieves, both in his work and in himself, is not to be found so much in the letters as in what lies behind them, while Schiller doubtless gives of himself more directly. It is wonderful to see how he always maintains a certain respectful aloofness.

As the museums were shut we could see “ only ” the churches. And in Bähr's *Frauenkirche* I discovered one of the most exquisite works of German architecture. So mighty, so compact, so harmonious. Here the Baroque becomes a Classic style. How different is Chiaveri's *Hofkirche* ! It dances and sings, it is light, free, unfettered, often almost provoking in its bold hiding of every contour ; and

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yet controlled by a taste that is completely sure—particularly in the gorgeous tower—and greatly imbued with imagination. Nevertheless, the nave poised in mid-air is somewhat questionable. One need hardly say anything about the *Zwinger*. It is probably the purest and most perfect example to be found in secular architecture.

In the evening *Figaro* at the Opera. How charmingly clear and light, dancing and ringing, its beautiful melodies are; profound with all their lightness, rich and perfect in their charm.

### DIARY

*Dresden, 27th May, 1917.*—To the Albertinum. Many decorative statues, Roman garden, sculpture. One of the stupid absurdities of our age is crowding such statues into museums instead of putting them up in gardens where you can really enjoy them.

### DIARY

*Dresden, 16th June, 1917.*—In the morning to Dresden again. Pa is still very ill, but the worst seems over. Prayed fervently:

Oh ! let me at my Father's side,  
Bright days and fertile decades live ;  
Much to his hopes Thou hast denied,  
This, therefore, wilt Thou give ?

I trust in Thee. Thy path is steep  
And long, but at the goal we find  
Deep peace and blessings full and deep :  
But—we are oft so blind.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

*Dresden, 17th June, 1917.*—Evening at the theatre—*King Ottokar's Happiness and Death*. It is in many respects artificial, colourless and over-emphasied, which has made parts of it stand out too much. Then there are passages that are thin and forced ; yet on the whole it is not only the expression of a deeply-felt spirit in an Austria rich in joy and vitality, but in Ottokar himself there lies real tragedy, raging passion, fateful sin, lifted above the feeble distinctions of ordinary morality, and inevitably bringing ruin in their train.

### DIARY

*21st June, 1917. Home Again.*—I am getting very sick of Berlin life. Thousands of people, thousands of impressions crowding in on one, nothing that leads to harmony. I am longing to get out to something whole ; here there is only distraction. What is the real thing I am striving for, that will embody all else ? Greatness, greatness—not in the sense of fame, but what the Greeks called *ἀρετή*, the Italians *virtù*, for which we have got no proper word. In greatness all other things are embodied. It implies concentration, culture, form, work, industry, fierce and incessant industry, but also the beauty of serene absorption in things, passion, an inner flame, pure, holy and permanent, with an unshakeable purpose, and wholeness in

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

everything. The nervousness of life here spells destruction; it means the breaking up and disintegration of anything that is whole. I am often troubled by this, but I have confidence in myself; seeing that things are like that, I try to get the best out of them anyhow. It brings about a widening of one's outlook and makes one understand the world better.

### DIARY

*2nd July, 1917.*—Ill in bed. Finished Goethe-Schiller correspondence. It is one of the most arresting and most affecting books I have ever read. In the evening did a lot of Middle High German. Very stimulating. Above all, Walther and Hartmann. There is after all no period in German literature in which the general level is so high. One is struck by the complete mastery of language and rhythm. What a wealth of most significant, original and mighty poets! And how rich it is in folk-songs too. At one and the same time you get at their highest development the epic, the drama, Latin poetry and plastic art. It was, indeed, a time when poetry stood in the centre of life, drawing great and holy inspiration from it.

### DIARY

*4th July, 1917.*—I sometimes get the feeling now that we are entering on a terrible epoch like that of the Roman Civil Wars, which may produce great

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individuals, but not that divine, many-sided and broad culture which I desire so much, which will make possible calm growth, ripening and maturing.

Oh, how I entreat this boon for my country ; only one century of such growing life ! The responsibility of the statesmen of to-day is immeasurable.

Revelled in Hölderlin. The 4th volume of the Hellingrath edition, which contains a large number of new poems ; some quite majestic and awe-inspiring. In reading many of them one feels the communion with the gods unattainable by man. It will in time become canonical and it will belong to the sacred writings of future humanity.

Read the Greek lyric writers. Delighted in old friends : Anacreon, Ibykus, Alcaeus, Simonides, above all, the glorious Sappho. Read Corinna for the first time ; touching, simple poems, quite charming in their strange, rough dialect.

### DIARY

10th July, 1917.—Surely there must be *one* man in Germany who realises the profound meaning of this time and can seize it and master it ?

### TO HIS FATHER

Zehlendorf, 16th July, 1917.—We are on the brink of a terribly steep precipice and the road to the heights leads over endless obstacles, and we do not know our leader yet. We can but repeat : " We bid you hope."

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### DIARY

*Innsbruck, 28rd July, 1917.*—Looked at this charming little town from every angle. It is quite shut in by chains of hills, and the impression of immovable fixity is most pleasing. Only the finished form is beautiful and, therefore, satisfying and right; here is diversity, charm and grandeur; life abundant. A town like this has something satisfying about it; even ugly streets become pleasant and agreeable by their confined background and because they lie so restfully in the bigger world that visibly surrounds them.

In the Museum. Delightful, as most provincial museums are, not too much in it, and everything in the same spirit, so that the effect is not confusing, but truly educative. At the entrance, and scattered about, are Roman milestones and altars. Really, one must feel a thrill of awe every time one sees the footprints of this unique people, masters of the world. Very much struck by the glorious male statues of Vischer.

### DIARY

*Neustift im Stubai, 25th July, 1917.*—Lay in the grass and read *Fahnlein der sieben Aufrechten*—a charming description and truly the apotheosis of a whole people. Surely unique is the inexhaustibility of Keller's narrative art. Not even the motives are repeated. Where this is most surprising is in the *Sinngedicht*, where the same subject, love

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for a woman of humble origin, is treated in the most diverse ways. This is probably his best, taken as a work of "art," because the framework and the story are so completely interwoven: pleasing, too, on account of the extraordinary economy and the sure sense of what would be too much in all this wealth of ideas. Another such artistic conception is the *Monk's Wedding*, by C. F. Meyer; but here you notice the conscious effort much more: in Keller life ebbs and flows and, without being aware thereof, you are led right into the pure temple of art.

### DIARY

*Neustift im Stubai, 27th July, 1917.*—Brentano's *Casperl and Annerl*, a charming story, rich, romantic and penetrating. Afterwards read some very fine battle songs by Brentano. Then *Demetrius*. What an incomparable conception, Shakespearean in its nobility and might! Pure drama, and what verse!

Now I am buried in Schiller's poems. *Happiness, A Walk, Nanie*, and others; they are among the most wonderful that have ever been penned; if he is a rhetorical poet, he is certainly the most perfect of the species.

### DIARY

*Munich, 4th August, 1917.*—Marvellous impressions in the Glyptothek. It gave me strength and courage, but also an oppressive sense of the Finite. My fears of the last few months for Pa came back



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redoubled in force and intensity. O, most cruel, insoluble riddle of death ! Prayed fervently : " Thy protecting hands over my father hold." A little comforted.

### DIARY

12th August, 1917. *Home Again.*—In the morning, Lieut. E. told me of R.'s praise of me. I always have a sort of mistrust of such praises ; they make me feel ashamed. I shall not live a life of show, though it *will* be for the world ; not an individualistic and narrow one. But inside I shall carry an unspoiled soul and a god of whose existence only a few need know, but who will shine the more brightly when I am gone. In my lifetime to have many enemies and conflicts, but after death, to be a symbol and a monument to people, a pioneer who strikes a path for posterity.

### DIARY

13th August, 1917.—I realise more and more what a lot I learned in my job that will be useful to me all my life in my outlook on people and things, modesty of judgment, outer calm and self-possession, knowledge of conditions and characters. What was lacking and perhaps harmfully so was deep personal feeling about it.

Read Humboldt's letters to Schiller with much enthusiasm ; he grows and matures till he reaches the classical profundity of the Wallenstein letter.

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### DIARY

20th August, 1917.—After a conflict that was quite insoluble I prayed fervently :

I know not whither leads my path,  
I have no sense nor sight to guide ;  
Leader Divine ! fill all my soul.  
Thou knowest my appointed task ;  
Thou knowest I have all to ask,  
And all myself to give Thee, whole.

Quite calm after that. Complete confidence.

### DIARY

Copenhagen,\* 26th August, 1917.—Glyptothek. Great pleasure and enjoyment in the ancient sculpture. I was struck by the extreme grandeur of two Egyptian sculptures of the twelfth dynasty, a few early Greek heads, some animals, the torso of a warrior from a grave, sculptured Roman portraits ; they are quite unequalled. Very satisfied and happy.

### DIARY

Copenhagen, 27th August, 1917.—Frauenkirche with Thorvaldsen's famous *Christ*, which left me rather cold in spite of the majesty of His bearing ; much more beautiful was the small relief of the mother walking with two children. Then to the Thorvaldsen Museum. A pleasing impression (although I have not much sympathy with this kind of art) ; in reality a temple, a kind of Heroon. Incom-

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parable is the tomb of Thorvaldsen in the middle under the modest ivy ; surrounded in the first circle by his many statues standing most artistically in brightly coloured halls ; in the second circle surrounded by the love and reverence of his people (whose best side he often depicts quite perfectly) ; they are symbolised most engagingly in the touching fresco on the outer side. Incidentally his statues have an exceptionally radiant amiability and a sweet charm of line, which reconcile one to a good deal that is soft and empty. In the afternoon the National Museum. Gorgeous old Nordic things. Here the austere strength and severity of my old beloved Edda world was revealed again.

### DIARY

28th August, 1917. *Journey home from Copenhagen.*—Left early. Fine crossing. Finished Bismarck's *Thoughts and Memoirs*. This book, so full of wisdom and nobility, can best be described as an heroic epic.

### DIARY

8th September, 1917.—A free Sunday. How good it is to have some leisure. Leisure, rest, peace, "time," has after all always been the hall-mark of the aristocratic life, has always been the native soil of culture. Thus the eight-hour day becomes nothing less than the most important demand for culture. If one gave this leisure, which was the

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privilege of the few, to the people, one would probably not turn all the people into aristocrats—which would go against the laws of history and life—but one would make life very much more complete, and above all, more beautiful.

Read Krumbacher.<sup>10</sup> A great spirit with far-seeing views, rich and most significant.

### DIARY

*10th September, 1917.*—A great deal to do ; very rushed. After a disintegrated day, became a complete being again. Read Novalis' *Ofterdingen*, the profound wisdom of which satisfied and strengthened me. What keen observation, thorough knowledge and beauty it contains. It thrilled my whole being like a pure life-giving stream.

### DIARY

*23rd September, 1917.*—Great events are taking place both on land and sea in the East. I am getting quite ill, stuck here like this. I am coming to feel as I have not felt since I ran away from Wickersdorf that time ; but I have just as little chance of success now.

### TO JULIE V.

*Zehlendorf, 24th September, 1917.*—I have an uncontrollable desire to learn, to read, to observe, to understand and to work, but also a pressing demand to *do* something—even if only something quite small—in this war which has need of everybody. That

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is why I cannot concentrate properly here. The sense of our danger never leaves me, nor the picture of my comrades enduring hardship and battle. You are thinking of the future, of my work later. I dream of it too, but labouring in the present I obey the will of the gods.

TO JULIE V.

*Zehlendorf, 8rd October, 1917.*—Yesterday I went to the Luther exhibition here; his head impressed me deeply. It must not be forgotten that the popular pictures of Luther only show him after his fortieth year, usually only in 1580. That still glorious profile portrait with the doctor's hat is 1523, and although you can trace the beginning of stoutness even here, the whole physiognomy is still full of fire and power. But the best of all is the picture of him as a monk, in 1518. That shows such a mixture of sensuous beauty, glowing fire, poetic fervour and completely controlled energy, as can only be found amongst the heroes of mankind.

### DIARY

*18th October, 1917.*—In the Cathedral for a performance of the Cathedral choir. Much impressed by a mass of Palestrina, a Bach Motette, and an organ piece of Buxtehude. Very much thrilled and purified. It is art like this which will have to be newly born from the spirit of the new age.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

26th October, 1917.—III. Read a lot of Usener's excellent shorter writings. Then letters of the Romantics. What a great and prophetic mind is Frederick Schlegel's ! What divine impudence, his desire to found a new religion !

### DIARY

29th October, 1917.—Curiously struck by Ricarda Huch's *Romanticism*, which I am just reading. She knows a lot, though I believe the last divine gift of wisdom has not been bestowed on her. She does not understand the Ancient World, she just sees it as a pure and beautiful world without the conflicts and convulsions within, for she herself is a modern, who does not believe that this Dionysos can be overcome ; and perhaps it *was* the greatest miracle in the history of the human spirit.

I think we are much simpler now. In spite of all my admiration of and devotion to romantic grandeur it has to me something foreign in it. We of to-day put our trust in what is and what is to come, we trust our eyes, which behold the whole beauty of the sun and of the day ; we trust our faith which binds us to the supernatural by prayer, and we have faith in our will and our deeds which have the power to create and mould. We are full of vitality, we are thrilled by passion, our senses fervent and eager to delight in self-abandonment and devotion, and our

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spirit alert and watchful for all that is present and to come. I respect the tragic conflicts in the romantic soul as I respect the sufferings of an unhappy man of whom we dimly feel that he was the author of our happiness. An inexhaustible fountain of wisdom flows in that period of Romanticism, and in the end a perfect human being must have gone through this confusion as a bridge to his greatness. It is marvellous what an insight into all the regions and compartments of the human mind Novalis and Frederick Schlegel and occasionally a few other people give us. And, after all, Goethe himself strayed through all the dangerous shallows and abysses of the Romantic world in his *Wilhelm Meister*, but he did not, like Niels Lyhne, find himself forced to the conclusion that nothing earthly could satisfy his desire for wandering; Faust in his old age came upon the solution and discovered the magic word : Action.

There is a very real danger at this stage of becoming trite and commonplace, and then the creative will and the desire to produce great things comes to an end. The unbearably shallow chatter which constitutes modern popular philosophy and general conception of life from a hygienic point of view, makes us wish to have even the intentional confusion of Tieck's creations. We have to drink from the wisdom of that age, and there is an enormous amount to be learnt from them, particularly in all matters of general culture.

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One extraordinarily interesting thing Schlegel says, that in his opinion his incapacity to love himself barred the road to greatness for him.

### DIARY

31st October, 1917.—Ill in bed. Felt very bad. The doctor pronounced it Menière's disease, a pure matter of nerves.

### DIARY

4th November, 1917.—Did not sleep at all that night. Planned my book on *The State*. Three volumes, ideas for the introduction, aim, classification, footnotes, and other absurd details. The titles are to be: (1) History of Theories of the State; (2) History of Political Institutions to the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century; (3) The Development of the National State in the Nineteenth Century: Present Form, and the Necessity for New Forms. Perhaps that will grow into two volumes, for the "new form" is to be the crowning point and purpose of the whole, is to contain all my thoughts on humanity and citizenship, State and Society, Church and State, stratification of the classes, Parliamentarianism, free competition and monopolies, colonisation, emigration, housing question, education of the people as a whole and as individuals, position of women, the question of war, foreign relations, in short the complete programme, less of a new party than of a new outlook, less of a new class than of a new youth. The first volume, the history of theories of the State,



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will provide the opportunity I so keenly desire for a serious study of the Ancient World, of the mediæval mind as well as the great philosophers. I shall run through the cycle of human history a second time in the second volume, only with more emphasis on the practical side of life. For this I shall study intensively the great writers on economics and socialism. The subject of the third and perhaps fourth volume I shall have constantly in mind.

### DIARY

*5th November, 1917.*—Pulse 40. In the afternoon went to Professor S., who diagnosed heart trouble and ordered mountain air. Very distressed. All my hopes to get to the front dashed to the ground.

### TO HERR V. B.

*Zehlendorf, 6th November, 1917.*— . . . I am an extremely sensuous person, sensuous taken in its original meaning, *i.e.*, I react very strongly to all external expressions ; above all my worship of the beautiful is unbounded. I am thrilled beyond words by any beautiful body, whether it be a beautiful girl, or boy, an old man, a child, or a beautiful animal. Seeing these gives me a feeling of joy and happiness not unlike that which a beautiful landscape or poem produces in me. But I sharply separate my sexual and even my erotic feelings from these ; I have no feelings of love towards men, at any rate never sexual love, and I never shall have. . . . I am

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infinitely grateful for any period when I was "unhappy in love." It is just when one comes up against an obstacle that one gains inner form and strength, one learns from oneself and about oneself, and from and of others ; in short—one grows better.

### DIARY

*8th November, 1917.*—To-day I should have been passed fit by the General Medical Board, now I have got to go on bearing it. I feel it is absolutely wrong to rest for any length of time during the war, just in order to recuperate. I must do a lot, and work a lot, to get over that feeling.

### TO HERR V. B.

*Zehlendorf, 10th November, 1917.*—It is in military service that we see the real man, and you too might have learned from my mother's books to accept joyfully the painful things of life and to recognise the bigger things among all that is unpleasant and petty in the life of the soldier ; each one of us has only a minute part in these terrific events, but each of us is under the obligation to do his utmost to bring our just cause to a victorious issue. This is far more than a matter of the weal or woe of a great number of single individuals ; it is a fight for the existence, liberty and greatness of the best that we have in our country, which has given us everything, and to which we owe everything. He who is guided by these feelings is above all the annoyances which can

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be inflicted by N.C.O.'s. I would not talk to you like this if I had not been out there for two years myself, up to the time I was wounded.

TO JULIE V.

*Neubeuern*,\*\* 18th November, 1917.—To-day was a perfectly glorious day; everywhere streaks of fiery cloud in the valleys, in which the sun produced truly Bacchanalian orgies of light. Yet the sky was quite clear, the woods one riot of vivid colour, and the hills glistening white.

TO ATHA N.

*Neubeuern*, 25th November, 1917.—. . . It is exceedingly difficult to answer the question of the visionary character of Novalis' experience. Can one draw these distinctions at all? Does not any sufficiently intense experience, in a poetic person, turn of its own accord to a vision? Is not the poet a visionary always, and is not every perfect poem the concrete expression of a vision?

TO HIS FATHER

*Neubeuern*, 3rd December, 1917.—I think it is right that the State should take out of the danger zone men who have deserved well of their country and who have proved themselves by their intellectual achievements. But to include therein young people like myself, who have so far done nothing, whom their relatives and friends merely consider gifted and

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of great promise, seems to me unjust and over-pretentious.

### TO ATHA N.

*Garmisch, 19th December, 1917.*—I have re-read *Hyperion*, and though with much delight, yet not with unqualified approval, nor with that sense of complete perfection which most of Hölderlin's poems give me. There are passages in the chapter on friendship as well as in the chapter on love, and more still in his attitude to life, in which, in my opinion, he falls into the exaggeration fashionable at the time and gets carried away by a whirl of words. It is always somewhat risky to disregard the boundary between poetry and prose; the only justification can be the prophet's, as in *Zarathustra*, and even there, if we are to be quite honest, we must say that an unpleasant sensation of emptiness creeps over us in those passages in which the stream of ideas becomes shallower and the wealth of imagery less. I am thinking especially of those chapters in which Nietzsche assumes the mantle of the prophet with regard to the nationalist, relativist and Darwinian theories of his age—which after all, in the course of years, did become quite insignificant.

### DIARY

*Garmisch, 22nd December, 1917.*—I steeped myself in the passionately glowing sonnets of Louise Labé. In no other woman but Sappho do you find

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poems of such sensuous power, subdued to such beautiful poetic form. They are a soul-stirring discovery, and carry inspiration in every line. In scarcely more than twenty sonnets this woman, with her great art and wonderful fervour, creates a whole world of human tragedy and grandeur.

### DIARY

*Garmisch, 24th December, 1917.*—One thing I now see clearly ; that the highest a man can achieve in life is neither fame, nor happiness, nor even greatness, nor that which up till now has seemed most desirable to me—his work. No ; I see now that the highest achievement is to be an example—such an one that by his very existence a man determines the state of the world and of mankind. Thus did Caesar achieve his influence, and Christ and Socrates and Alexander. I have seen again and again, in this war, what it means to be a leader. It means everything, and the leader has it in his power to achieve anything. How ? By preaching, by teaching, by isolated deeds ? No ; much more by what is commonly called “ setting an example,” and that is implicit in his life, in his being what he is, in his very existence. And this will be the determining factor in the moulding of the State, that goal towards which I vaguely feel my *Daimon* urging me. It is important to envisage the new State, to prepare for it ; but more important still to establish it on firm foundations ; and most important of all is that one

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man shall embody it and make it a living thing. For only living beings can create life. It may rejoice in good laws and excellent officials, its citizens may have the best intentions and great ability, good fortune may shine upon it, but yet it will remain a dead thing, inarticulate, if there are no great *personalities* to impart colour and light to it. Stein may not have achieved very positive results; on closer inspection we see that a great deal of his work has to be attributed to his colleagues; yet the very fact that he existed, and was what he was, gave life and vitality to the whole, unified isolated factors, and impressed on the Prussian popular uprising that particular stamp which it will for ever retain. A man is not valuable for the sake of his words or his deeds, but only for that which he really and truly is. But it would be absurd to try consciously to make one's own self such an example. For to be that is really the crown of life, its supreme achievement. And this supreme thing is not attained in battle; it comes unsought, as a gift from the gods. Ultimate ideals are not attainable by even the most passionate exercise of will-power alone.

To become a "man" in the truest meaning of the word, to perfect one's life, can be achieved by one thing only—perfect and divine love.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Garmisch, 25th December, 1917.*—I have just read Nietzsche's letters and was profoundly moved by his

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tragic fate. What a cry for love, for sympathy is there, yet only fresh disappointments lay in store for him and ever greater loneliness! How inevitable it is that he should worship himself and accumulate a boundless contempt for all others, especially for Germans. It is a torment to watch his mind gradually becoming clouded, to see him veritably blinded by these emotions of his, distorted almost to the point of caricature, and to watch how, as soon as his judgments enter this domain, they become not only warped, but childish and preposterous. But the most painful of all is to see a sort of feminine vanity appear in his very last letters, just before the catastrophe; he is happy when some utterly insignificant Russian princess shows him some trivial politeness, when he is "treated like a prince"! This greatest, most sovereign personality, can say that!

### DIARY

*Garmisch, 26th December, 1917.*—The sledge drive to the Eibsee was glorious, though there was a lot of mist still about. Afterwards we rowed on the Badersee, which never freezes and always retains its divinely green translucence. It was an indescribably fantastic scene and affected me deeply. It was here that I spent the happiest days of my youth!

### DIARY

*Garmisch, 28th December, 1917.*—Went on a lovely ski-tour to the Eckbauer. The infinite loveliness

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and solemnity of the mountains in winter, the majesty of the pine woods deep in snow, glittering like crystals in the setting sun, the endless expanse of white broken only by the sharply defined ski-tracks.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Garmisch, 29th December, 1917.*—I read Gomperz; "we must talk about him a great deal. At present I have really only got objections. Not only do I think that he quite grotesquely distorts the development of Hellenic philosophy, and do I consider it pure blasphemy to take the words of Demonax out of Lucian for the motto of such a book, but also I am at present, for purely theoretical reasons, very much opposed to the ideal of inner individual freedom. In the first place it seems to me wrong in principle to take as the starting point of an ethical system, not the common cause, nor achievement, nor "God" in any sense, nor even the type of great-minded person who lives, thinks and acts great-heartedly in his struggle with passion, hope and fear; to take not these things, but exclusively personal happiness, the happiness of the mediocre man, who spends his days "free of emotions" as the witty Demonax so neatly says. This is Eudemonic! I do not see where the daemonic is to be found in this; neither have I yet grasped why Gomperz burdens the poor Greeks (he might at least talk of Hellenism only) with all this.



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### DIARY

19th January, 1918. *At Home*.—Declared fit for active service! I stay here till February, then rejoin my battalion.

### DIARY

*Naumburg, 9th February, 1918*.—I stayed long in the most impressive cathedral and derived new vigour and strength from the divine statues of its founders. Oh, those were people who knew how to take life, how to mould it!

### DIARY

15th February, 1918.—Kissed Pa and Julie and bade them a swift farewell. Then passed an easy night full of dreams and presentiments. Read Hauptmann's *Heretic of Soana* on the journey, one of the few classics in modern German prose, full of great wisdom in form and construction, obviously the work of years. Produces a most elated feeling.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Naumburg, 16th February, 1918*.—You will have received my telegram by now. The G.H.Q. ordered my departure for to-morrow *via* Munich—Kufstein—Salzburg—Tauern railway—Villach—Udine—Pordenone. It may be as well that we shall not have to say good-bye again.

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TO JULIE V.

*Munich, 18th February, 1918.*—There was much we left unsaid. But I could not have given you an answer in words. What I am when I return will be my reply.

### DIARY

*Munich, 18th February, 1918.*—*Minna von Barnhelm*, at the Royal Theatre. Charming production and what a delightful comedy! How well Tellheim is pictured! Just a little ironically, pathetic, entirely German, and only to be understood by Germans, with his heaviness, his downrightness, his idealism and "nobility of character"; at the same time a little extravagant and inevitably somewhat embittered. Comprehensible only to Germans, for, indeed, every real German has more or less of Tellheim in him. Inability to take things light-heartedly, that is fundamental to us all, as is also the lack of a saving sense of cynicism in our composition; the over-emphasis we give to everything; the brooding on our own fate, the tendency to feel afflicted by everything; great passion; a little of Don Quixote perhaps, yet heroic; and last but not least—the luck of the soldier; that makes the picture complete.

### DIARY

*19th February, 1918, En route.*—Mid-day in Salzburg in bright sunshine. Delightful drive

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through the town. Charming Baroque, the Mirabel garden, the two horse-ponds, the palaces and the residence. Inside the cathedral, the architecture of which is very cleverly proportioned to the *total ensemble* of a closed square, the Baroque shines in serene and princely effulgence. It makes God seem a great gentleman who has invited his guests into the banquet-room and now comes graciously to meet them. But as a contrast the obviously early Gothic, beautiful Franciscan church has been quite hopelessly spoilt by the same period. A cross-vault resting on gigantic pillars. I have never seen anything like it and it deeply impressed me.

### DIARY

20th February, 1918. *En route*.—A marvellous drive through the Fella valley. The brilliant moonlight made everything seem like an extraordinary, ghostly yet concrete dream ; the valleys gaped open like wounds, villages grew out of rocks ; it all seemed to rise from the hard unescapable mountains and flow away into the endless plain. At 10.30 in Udine. Deeply impressed. Stroll through the deserted starlit city. The town presents a wonderfully harmonious whole, wide squares, a magnificent hall, and a wonderful cloister leading up on to the hill. Well, it just is—Italy ! Two cypresses, nothing striking in themselves, stand in the simple curve of a Renaissance gateway, on the left the clock tower of a church, on the right a palace ; on all sides

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the plain falls away so that the trees with their tender austerity of outline stand free under the stars. And in this simple scene, repeated a thousand times, lies all the charm and sweetness of this ever-beloved land.

### DIARY

26th February, 1918. *On the Journey.*—In the morning, at 6 a.m., for Trieste. Magnificent journey. First the view of the mountains, then the blue Adriatic, in the background the Alps still gleaming white, and near by the fighting zones of the Isonzo, Monfalcone, Gradisca, and the other famous names. Passed the charming Miramar, arriving at Trieste in the afternoon. Wandered to the Cathedral of San Giusto and to the fort. The constructional history of San Giusto is so interesting that it overshadows the great pleasure one obtains from looking at it. Made into a church in the thirteenth century out of two adjoining basilicas, the one dating from 880 (with the Corinthian pillars of the old temple), the other from 524, containing two marvellous mosaics of the fifth to sixth centuries, and finest of all, a great clock tower dating back approximately to the year 1000; it is a unique memorial, fascinating to the imagination. Winckelmann's tomb, which lies just next to it in the charming Lapidario, among a number of ancient remains, seems to prove that here still persists the power of the ancient gods of the Capitol who were driven into exile from this place.

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### DIARY

28th February, 1918.—Departure 7.30 a.m. In cool weather by Goritza and St. Peter to Pevacina for entraining. Highly interesting. We passed through the districts of the ninth to eleventh Isonzo battles, the hills were all ploughed up, the woods demolished, all life extinct. The ghastly impression of destruction, not only of everything human, but of the very earth itself, the sacred earth, thought to be eternal and inviolable, affected me very much.

### DIARY

2nd March, 1918. *On the Journey West.*—Read Stifter's *The Descendants*; wise, pure and edifying, as Stifter always is, it is sometimes a little too long; but that one beautiful passage in which Susanne speaks to Frederick for the first time makes up for all other deficiencies. It is as if there were on this page a glow from which warm, full-blooded life flows forth.

### DIARY

*Ensisheim in Alsace, 6th March, 1918.*—Read Ludo Hartmann: *A Hundred Years of Italian History*. Very interesting; and there is much to be learnt from it, more especially that in the course of world history it is only the living organism, the organised nation, the State, that wins through; it is never any theoretical structure or house of ideas, however clever. Thus Italy was not created by the

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

great Mazzini, but by the State of Piedmont, with all its inadequacies. Of course, it is true that nothing can happen without the ideas and the great men ; these provide the stimulus, content, purpose ; but the concrete embodiment of ideals can only be achieved by the unlovely path of reality, by adding to what already exists and including that which is lacking.

TO JULIE V.

*Ensisheim, 15th March, 1918.*—For two days I was touching on the borders of the H.K.\* position, then I stayed a night in Sulz and the next day made the most glorious trip. We went over Thierenbach and St. Anna up the ascent to the Sudel, then—always face to face with the great Belchen—through the charming Rimbach valley past Rimbach and Rimbachzell over to Gebweiler, a very pretty, lively little old town, with shops and a good confectioner's, and more than that, a very beautiful Romanesque and a very pompous late Baroque church. In the afternoon I rode up the Murbach valley to the old monastery of Murbach, sacred, historical ground where Charlemagne stayed. The country round is quite bewitching, glorious woods, charming chains of hills, and (on account of their obvious wealth from the sixteenth to eighteenth century onwards—i.e., really from the thirteenth) full of quite beautiful, old, well-preserved hamlets. Bühel, on the way,

\* Hartmansweiler-Kopf—a hill near Ensisheim.  
[Tr. note.]

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lies beautifully with a great Roman basilica on the side of an open hill, beneath which the village nestles; but the crown of all is Murbach. It is extraordinary with what ease the whole is made to fit together—the landscape and its surroundings—and one marvels at the regular classical monumentality, carried out into the tiniest detail. Only Worms and St. Gereon had had a similar effect on me. It is thus that I imagine the position and appearance of the monastery in *Geheimnisse*.\*

### TO HIS FATHER

*Ensisheim, 17th March, 1918.*—The return of the armies after the war will bring an abundance of energy home, with potentialities both for good and evil that are hardly to be estimated. There will be many ruined lives, many people tempted to the point of crime, great possibilities of expansion will be felt on all sides, and many sensitive natures will be trodden under heel. The guardians of morals, of civilisation, of order, will have to be on the alert; women, leaders of the State, representative institutions, judges, and the clergy, party and trade union leaders, all will have to do their utmost, and will have to exert all their might to direct the floods and currents of uncontrolled and aimless energy into great natural channels, to raise ethical and legal standards which will have become quite demoralised.

\* Goethe's poem. [*Tr. note.*]

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

One other thing I want to say : do not fear for me, I am calm, at peace with myself, sober-minded ; I am protected by a lucky star, and Fate will not decree that this vessel should be shattered.

Forgive this somewhat "pathetic" harangue, but I expect that in view of the strict censorship of the letters, you will only receive cards from me until decisive events have happened ; that is why I wanted to say all this once more.

### TO JULIE V.

*Ensisheim, 20th March, 1918.*—I have read a very significant and beautiful novel of Knut Hamsun : *Victoria*. Although I esteem his skill very highly, yet inwardly I do not accept this form of, or rather lack of, art. There is little doubt that in the finished subtlety of the psychological analyst, traced out to its furthestmost limit, there is great moral immodesty, to say nothing more. Sensual pleasure in such books places those people who read and feel impelled to read many of them in a curious light. I am intentionally making this observation in connection with an undeniably masterly, mature and (from a different point of view) fundamentally pure book. It is not this book that I mean, but the whole trend of the modern novel, with its psychological pre-occupation. The old type of German educational novel (*Meister, Osterdingen*, even *Hyperion, der Grüne Heinrich*, and so on), and the great period



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novels too, like the *Wahlverwandtschaften*, *Münchhausen*, must be estimated quite differently. Perhaps I am judging quite one-sidedly, but I feel here a certain decadent poison, which in small doses is seductive, but when indulged in too freely becomes ruinous. For the rest besides a lot of technical army stuff, I read Goethe and a story of Cervantes.

### TO HIS FATHER

*Ensisheim, 22nd March, 1918.*—We don't get much opportunity to read. I am just engaged on Treitschke's *Cavour*, which I am greatly enjoying. It puts Hartmann's picture of him quite in the shade. And I cannot see that Treitschke pursues a one-sided hero-cult. Just in this book it seems to me that he is quite successful and convincing in his portrait of Cavour in relief against the political, cultural, social and economic surroundings of his time. It is quite true that, in Hartmann, a considerable section is devoted to the position of the lower classes in Piedmont. But the history of the *Risorgimento* seems to be proof positive against the exaggerations of the materialist conception of history. Hartmann expresses surprise that the movement could gain such force in face of the complete misery and absolute political apathy of the working classes of Italy, particularly of Piedmont. It was simply an upper class movement of the nobility and the great intellectuals of the towns.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### DIARY

*Ensisheim, 24th March, 1918.*—Along the Vosges to Colmar. Beautiful sunny journey. The ancient culture of these parts permeates every village in a most pleasing manner. On a hill to the left towers the gigantic ruin *Drei Ahren*. In Colmar the streets, squares, yards and a delightful town hall make very charming pictures. Everything grows naturally, but is trimmed and cultivated with wisdom and understanding. One could compare the work of these Gothic architects of cities with that of a sensitive gardener. The deepest impression as regards art was made on me by the interior of St. Martin, an extraordinarily harmonious structure, in which the effect of light has been treated with the utmost skill. Suddenly the *communiqué*—Peronne taken, the Somme crossed. Everything else vanished. What is to be our fate ?

### TO HIS FATHER

*Ensisheim, 25th March, 1918.*—I have just been ordered over the heads of all the others to go as adjutant to the staff of von B.'s regiment, which we are supporting. You can imagine how annoyed I am ; at the same time, I am glad that you can be at rest about me in quite a different sense than ever before. I had much rather have stayed at the front, but one is a soldier and must obey.

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### DIARY

30th March, 1918. *In the Field.*—Read Hebbel's letters and diaries. How terribly this Titan-like being is bent and made ugly by external circumstances, petty worries. If he had not been possessed of a strong instinct of self-preservation, the gift to be able to transform all evil into good, and a good slice of egoism, or rather an egocentric nature, he would long ago have succumbed to his immeasurable irritability. And he has the courage to accept his bad qualities for the sake of the whole ; altogether he has an extraordinary knowledge of himself.

### DIARY

31st March, 1918. *In the Field.*—Very much touched by the rest of Hebbel's life. In what an amazing way he gets rid of all this mental anguish without growing petty or conceited, in fact, achieving a regal self-consciousness ; how everything comes to him by means of Woman, through her ; full of great and very human traits he is.

### TO HIS FATHER

4th April, 1918. *Camp near Hattencourt.*—I have never set eyes on such utter havoc as exists in the villages just before our front line. What a dreadful sight is the cathedral of St. Quentin with its trembling crest raised above ruins piled mountain high, inside it the heavens looking down through the

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

roof, which has been crushed to the very floor. A few poor stumps are all that is left of the buttresses and pillars of the cross-vault. The remains of marvellous rose-windows, splinters of stained-glass windows iridescent with colour, still stick here and there. And more than ever grotesque, where one thinks only the Eternal can exist, and even that seems close to destruction, is the effect of the modern painting of the choir, screaming with colour, a truly typical picture of modern barbarity. The remnants of the ceiling painted absurdly as a starlit sky continue to blink stupidly down upon us in a few places, while next to it the real sky stretches blue and austere above the ruins of beautifully curved arches.

### TO JULIE V.

5th April, 1918. *On Active Service.*—I am very well; the only sad thing is that we get no post; but one has to get used to that, if only *you* get some! I do not know whether it is imagination, but I feel quite different—quite at ease—when I am in the company of Bavarians, as I am now. There is always some point of contact, and some pleasant talk, but more than that, we have common recollections of the Bavarian mountains. Yesterday we talked of them so much that I dreamed the whole night of them and my yearning to be among them once more became quite overpowering. How inexpressibly lovely were our winter days in Garmisch, the summer days in the Stubai, and how often we shall spend such days

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together yet with Pa! For the rest, I feel that I am in the right place here, even if our present situation is not the most desirable.

### DIARY

6th April, 1918.—This military education is a darned good thing for me. But I suspect life has a good many blows in store for me yet, else Nature would not have endowed me with so much inner power to throw off unpleasant things, always to see the best, and never to despair; nor would she have given me so great an urge to assert my individuality, nor the capacity I have, not only to overcome all petty and degrading things, but also to transform them into good, with the help of my *Amor fati*.

### DIARY

11th April, 1918. *In the Field*. — I received definite news that Kurt Gerschel has fallen. Thus are they all torn away, those that were any good, that were young, courageous and full of hope in the future. He was such a frank, fresh, clean fellow, honest and straight as but few are, such a lovable being! A real lesson to Anti-Semites, brave and proud and true. May he rest in peace!

### TO HERR HANS B.

11th April, 1918. *In the Field*.—If our death is really written in the stars, it seems to me a poor business to interfere with the work of Fate.

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

### TO JULIE V.

18th April, 1918. *In the Field*.—To-day I made a speech to the 1st Company on the offensive and its political effects. But it is so difficult and comprehensive a subject that I was not quite satisfied. It is a most difficult task to lecture to simple people. One has to present complicated problems precisely, state the main outlines so that they shall be clearly grasped without giving a false impression of the essential nature of things—and that so often lies in vague colours that shade into one another—without prematurely solving and defining problems yet unsolved by means of the conjuror's cheap tricks of simplification. It is extremely difficult to avoid platitudes and to discover main points from which one can view the international situation; in the present confusion, it seems almost an impossibility. So I am very dissatisfied, but have learnt a lot, nevertheless.

### TO JULIE V.

18th April, 1918. *In the Field*.—It is raining; we have had no post for three days; we do not seem to be going to get away; altogether it is not exactly pleasant. I have just read with much enjoyment the *Revolt of the Netherlands*. To my mind it stands midway between real history and an historical novel, but it is an extraordinarily vivid and rich description. It would be fine if we had these historical

## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

paintings (which is the best name for them) for other great periods too.

### DIARY

22nd April, 1918. *In the Field*.—Read *Mother and Child*, by Hebbel. A very human, far-sighted, great and beautiful epic. It has true epic style, for it gives in the fate of individuals a picture of the whole period. In some places, it is true, theory is victorious; it is betrayed by unnecessary modernisms and lapses into self-consciousness; yet, on the whole, a classically rounded-off work.

### TO JULIE V.

21st April, 1918. *In the Field*.—I really feel very at home on the Staff. I use my free time for riding and reading, military and political things, and in between, do all sorts of things for recreation. The completely devastated district round here—the old Somme line—the shelled villages, often entirely shot to pieces, have something about them that depress one terribly—a feeling one has to master. What will you be doing now? You are sitting on the verandah, where perhaps the lilac is still in bloom or the jasmine is already fragrant, and are reading or writing something very beautiful; the sun is shining warmly and the birds are singing. We had snow here yesterday and there have been sharp frosts at night-time. The tender peach and cherry blossoms, which were blooming in the little trees given by the

## WITH EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

English to help forward reconstruction here have all been frost-bitten. But do not think that I am complaining. When one sees here the horrors of war's devastation, one can only be thankful that this time our country was spared the unfettered fury, and can only want to go on fighting till the danger is over.

TO JULIE V.

26th April, 1918. *In the Field*.—As I promised that I would always be honest, I must tell you that we are relieving to-night. But there is no cause for anxiety.

### DIARY

27th April, 1918. (*Last Entry*).—Departure at 5 a.m. We are relieving in the S.W. part of Marcelcave. They are all just coming back from the front, at the end of their tether. We have got a big cellar, which is now being eagerly fortified. The 20th, which I found east of Villers-Bretonneux, got two direct hits in their column while marching yesterday. To-day the dead still lay in the street, swimming in their blood. I wanted to go forward to the 8th, but the Major forbade it, to my great annoyance; I do not feel at rest till I know the whole position.

TO JULIE V.

*Marcelcave, 28th April, 1918. (Last Letter)*.—I am writing sitting in the deep cellar in Marcelcave, in which we are seeking shelter from artillery fire. We



## THE DIARY OF OTTO BRAUN

are four miles behind the front firing line. I was not allowed to go up to it on account of the increased artillery activity in No Man's Land. The Major takes great care of us, he simply forbade it, which very much annoyed me, because there is a battalion in front of us, and I think that the regimental staff should at least have seen the front line. But as I said, the Major will have no trifling in such matters. The fact that we are here, merely temporary reliefs, remains unchanged, and by the time you get this letter, we shall in all probability be miles away.

That feeling I had, when I came out to the front this time—of a great *change* awaiting me—thrills me again now. It is a wonderful feeling; the future lying ahead, impenetrable; and I weave into it brilliant colours, landscapes of magic, enchantment. . . .<sup>82</sup>

## PART IV

### POEMS AND VERSES



## FOREWORD TO PART IV

Joyous exuberance and restless longing strive for expression even in the little boy, and his childish poems beat with a passionate rhythm. Many of them are chaotic and wild. Though the best of them show his strongly conflicting instincts which an imperative necessity impelled him to ennoble and unify, yet there is reason for not including them in this first collection. Instead, this selection, taken from the poems written between his fourteenth and seventeenth years, begins with songs and prayers inspired by the gods and spirits which peopled the world of the growing boy. His visions and dreams and emotions are released in song: his experience finds equivalent expression in words.

The war came, and in no later poem is the unity of these early songs achieved. For he found no poetic form that could adequately express this terrific experience: "A poet is a king who rules over his material, but who is capable of controlling such material?" So he wrote during his first spring at the front. He has as yet no images adequate to embody his emotions even when intensified by suffering and the lapse of time. He was awaiting a new language when death sealed his lips. The

## FOREWORD TO PART IV

dramatic poem *Eros and Psyche* is the work of the sixteen-year-old boy. The legend of Apuleius—as will be seen—served more as a starting point for his own imagination than as a guide for him to follow. Although it is an occasional poem, it is composed in a blissful ecstasy of love and life. Who will fail to understand why the thanks of the final prayer are offered to Apollo and not to Dionysus: and who could wish it otherwise?

### HIPPOLYTA <sup>62</sup>

HER shape sways as a fountain sways,  
Harmonious in the Wind's embrace ;  
Or like a birch tree bends and plays  
When the flute calls, in rhythmic grace.  
No Centauress was ever so swift and slight  
Throned on her coal-black steed, in arrowy flight.

*11th January, 1918.*

## SO LIGHT THE PACES OF HER FEET

So light the paces of her feet

As fawns' that wander through the wood ;

The budding violets are more sweet—

She glimmered past, nor scarcely stood.

A poplar that the amorous storm

Ruffles and bends from root to crown

Is not more graceful than her form,

Languidly leaning, bending down.

But like a falcon, bold and light

She springs into her saddle-throne

And cleaves the air, in arching flight

Companioned by the wind alone.

*12th January, 1918.*

### REST AFTER PLAY

BEHOLD the Queen whose slender limbs in sleep

Forget the rhythmic mirth of Dance and Play,

Her maidens in their movements silence keep

Lest song should waken her. Then, weary, they

Forget awhile the Dances and the Day.

Helios, alone, down-gazing, checks awhile

The tumult of his fiery horses' feet,

And looks and lingers long—as mile on mile

The shadows lengthen—o'er those sleepers sweet.

Then sinks in the remembrance of a smile.

*16th January, 1913.*



## WHEN FIRST BEHELD

(*Elegy*)

Thus Bellerophon speaks :

Rememberest thou  
When, on the fragrant meadows, first I saw Thee  
Reining thy rearing steed, magnificent  
As Artemis, in form and mien ? I lifted  
Mine arms to Thee in prayer as to the Sister  
Of Phœbus, Zeus-begotten. And from among the  
branches  
And swaying twigs, the wood nymphs broke with  
laughter  
What time I gazed on Thee. Rememberest Thou  
Their mirth and mocking as They saw me stand  
Amazed before Thee ? But with sovereign ease  
Thou didst rein in Thy steed and summon me ;  
I came, a worshipper, to Thee ; my spear  
And arrows spilling from my hand and quiver,  
Unmarked ; for I beheld the golden Crown  
Crisp curling, lightly rippling round Thy brow—  
Naught else. And kissing shyly the white hem  
Of Thy short cloak, I prayed Thee for good hunting.  
And then Thy voice, reverberant, demanded  
My country and my race, what city cradled,  
What Mother bore me ? And by what strange road,  
Homeless and uncompanioned, I had come ?  
Thy voice was like the silver trumpets' call,  
Fearless and proud in sweetness. And I turned  
Westward mine eyes toward the Phrygian plain,

## WHEN FIRST BEHELD

Treeless and desolate ; but toward the East  
Amid the wreaths of mist, the mountains blue  
Rose beyond Cappadocia, and the streak  
Of burnished metal that the Halys tokened.  
There lay Naziantia, there Garsaura, there,  
Beyond the towering screen of woods, Tyomen.  
Thus I beheld my pathway. All the land  
Laughed welcome and the sun shone over all ;  
Shone on the topmost tableland, where flowered  
That mead, with hyacinth and rose and Thee  
Throned on that mighty stallion. And the sun  
Kissed Thee from hair to feet through Thy white  
robes,

And the great horse stirred 'neath his delicate load,  
But, at a pressure of slim muscles, stood.  
But the arch mirth of Thine attendant nymphs  
Forced me to raise mine eyes to meet Thine eyes  
And know the Goddess in Thee. Arm and shoulder  
Curved in the pride of youthful power, Thy breast  
Was hidden by the chlamys, but Thine hair  
Flowed freely in the breeze, a stream of gold.  
Ankle and wrist were prisoned in the clasp  
Of pearls, less white than those Thy smile revealed.  
And, at that smile, my courage poured again  
Into my veins and reverently I spake :  
" Glorious among all maidens, whomsoever  
Thou art, if born of Leto, or the head  
Of Father Zeus, armed and plumed, or risen,  
A pearl of Tyre, from the Cyprian Sea :  
Or born of mortal seed and mortal stem

## WHEN FIRST BEHELD

In likeness of the gods : Believe my words !  
Nor evil nor deceit is in my heart,  
But reverence and worship." Thus I spake  
And like the lark that circles ere she seeks  
Her nest on earth, Thou didst spring lightly down  
And, throned amid Thy laughing bevy, sit  
Reclining midst the flowers. And I stood  
Trembling before Thee, and my heart beat high,  
And my throat closed upon my voice, but clearly  
I forced my words to 'suade thine ear. I told  
My parents' lineage, and all my deeds ;  
And of the Tusked Terror, the Wild Boar  
Whom I had followed to this meadow fair,  
Through wood and marsh and crevice of the hills :  
And that I prayed for aid to Artemis,  
The golden-arrowed lady of the woods,  
And that, what time I prayed, mine eyes beheld One  
Throned like the Goddess, like the Goddess fair.  
Thus, mingling jest with earnest, I told all,  
And greatly daring, lay down at Thy feet  
Among the meadow grass. Then Thy nymphs all  
Greeted my tale with eager cries ; but Thou  
Wert silent, listening to some sound afar.  
And suddenly, alas ! I heard the cries  
Of my pursuing comrades seeking me,  
And all the hounds, belling. I swung my sword  
Across my shoulder, seized my spear, returned  
The scattered arrows to my quiver,—Lo !  
Empty were mead and wood, and Thou hadst flown  
I cried aloud and fled in wild pursuit.

## WHEN FIRST BEHELD

I saw the fluttering of Thy robe, the glitter  
Of Thy tall spear, the glory of Thine hair,  
Vanish, along the misty mountain-side.

Rememberest Thou, how first I saw Thy face ?  
Hippolyta, silent Thou dost smile. Cup-bearer !  
Fill high the cup from the great Vase of Gold  
From Knossos, fill the cup with crimson wine,  
Wine that shall warm the white flesh of my Queen.  
Rest Thou more utterly among the fleeces  
And skins of fawn and leopard, that caress Thee.  
Lean back and let the Cushions bear the treasure  
Of Thy light feet, Thine arched and argent feet ;  
And listen, Oh Beloved of my Heart !  
In dreaming silence, to the vibrant song  
Of this great Minstrel that Apollo sends.

*24th January, 1918.*

### DAWN IN FEBRUARY

As the sun rose, the frosted plain  
Was like a shimmering vest or veil  
That Aphrodite, in her flight  
Southward to Paphos, smiling dropt.  
The clear sky's arch, abruptly grand  
And all the fragile film of snow,  
Were tinted with an amber glow.

The air was like a crystal sphere.  
Far birds homed, high and swift : and near,  
The pheasant preened his plumage pride.  
The fallow earth's brown heavy smell  
Steamed to the sky ; and by the side  
Of bare black thickets, spring's young bride  
The silvery birch stood sentinel.

A twittering note thrilled from some tiny bird ;  
In the faint breeze the delicate grass-blades  
stirred.

*11th February, 1918.*

## EROS

HAST caught me, Eros, in thy magic net ?  
Or do I wander on life's way, as yet  
Unscathed and proud ?  
Often afar I have seen thee, fleet and shy,  
And flashed a glance of greeting—smile or sigh  
Amid the crowd :  
But on the wings of dawn the vision passed—  
Art come to me, at last ?

*10th June, 1913.*

**TO . . .**

**LIKE a gazelle,  
Or dappled fawn bounding across the meadows  
Thou didst speed to meet me.**

**Like a singing arrow  
Piercing the air with music in its flying,  
Flashing above the grass and swaying flowers :  
So thou, in the glory of thy swiftness.**

**But when burning rays gush from the Zenith  
Bathing the petal soft beauty of thy body—  
Then, like a Goddess, Thou liest at ease, a languid  
Rose amid roses.**

***29th August, 1918.***

## NOVEMBER EVENING

*(In the Park at Bremen.)*

WHEN evening falls, the sable shafts of pine  
Stand silently against the marble skies,  
The pale and massive parapets of cloud—  
When evening falls.

The slender argent birch, with lifted arms  
Pays homage to the moon, whose light serene  
Quivers athwart the ripples of the lake,  
When evening falls.

And now, the wind's low whisper dies away,  
And brooding night unfolds her quiet wings.  
And slumber creeps beneath faint stars and few,  
When evening falls.

10th November, 1918.



## SUNSET

THE air was like a crystal sea  
Infinite, liquid, deep, divine,—  
Where quivering, floating ceaselessly,  
The lissom birch and black haired pine  
Drank the Sun's kiss, for all to see.  
But where the Zenith soared from sight  
The purple weft of cloud unfurled  
Stretched like a veil to left and right,  
To fall and fold the weeping world ;  
And on the farthest forest height  
The serried spears were stained with red—  
A faint chill wind blew from the Dead—  
And naked in his royal pride  
Helios, a silent Hero died.

*7th January, 1914.*

## TO APHRODITE

*(Aphrodite Urania)*

LUCENT azure, Cypris, is thy couch,  
Across the curve of Heaven thou liest, at rest  
And Helios kisses thy brow to a fire-opal.  
But thy silver feet rest where a sapphire cleft  
Breaks through the dusky crown of mighty oaks.  
Birches slim are thy fan-girls, bending before thee  
Timidly, tenderly wafting coolness toward thee,  
Breathing murmurous laughter of the spring-tide.  
Thrushes nestle between thy breasts, and sparrows,  
Tiny ardent flutterers, fighters, lovers !—  
Hover above the clasps of thy shimmering Cestus.  
Oh Beguiler, smile on us, resplendent,  
Light on the hidden meres among the rushes !  
Light on the teeming earth and all her children !  
Light on the World thy smile, oh thou Enchantress.

1st March, 1914.

### THE HEART'S AWAKENING

I THINK, my heart, in those sweet rains of spring  
Thou didst awaken, touched by arrowy gold,  
By golden darts from my Beloved's eyes.  
In the rich downrush of tempestuous drops—  
Oh perfumed flood of rapture, power and peace—  
The Genii and the Gods, and all the Loves  
Danced, triumphing through the portals of my  
heart.

Now like a smitten harpstring, sings my soul,  
And I march to the rhythm of mine own songs—  
Songs for ever dedicate to Thee—  
Proud and calm, with neither fear nor haste,  
Out on the unknown Fateful ways of Life.

*6th March, 1914.*

### WHEN I NO LONGER SEE . . .

WHEN I no longer see those eyes of Thine—  
More radiant to me than Our Lord the Sun—  
I am prisoned in the labyrinth of Doubt,  
Torn by the fangs of Agonised Desire  
And Fear, that slays the Soul.

Then like a delicate flower,  
Above the icy dark thy face unfolds  
And gleams upon me, like the argent moon,  
With that faint smile and inward dreaming gaze,  
And faintly smiling, fades.

But the abyss  
Is filled with tremulous opalescent rays,  
They burn through me and melt the evil spell  
That prisoned me. My tortured body breathes  
Celestial air and fragrance of the limes,  
And from the waking dream floats into sleep,  
And from oblivion into dreams of thee.

Then across meadow and brook, among the corn  
And dappled shadows of the whispering woods,  
I follow the witchery of thy dancing feet,  
Win thy kiss, thine embrace, thine uttermost love.

*20th March, 1914.*

## INVOCATION

I LOVE you, trees ! Oh slender, supple trees,  
Companions of my dreams, tost by the winds,  
But never swept away by those wild gusts.  
For you shoot upward, stately and secure,  
Full of the living sap of glorious growth.  
Striving toward the stars, above the storm,  
And drawing life deep from the natal earth.

I do adjure you, when your crests unfold  
In ceaseless majesty, give tender shade  
Give shelter and adornment to your Mother  
Who treasures your strong roots safe in her  
heart.

Gods, grant me growth as gracious as the trees !  
Let me in June, warm with the sun, and fresh  
With opal raindrops, blossom to the breeze.  
And let the night bring slumber to mine eyes,  
And the morn, dews ; and winter, all his storms !  
And all the joys of life their golden seed !  
Grant, Gods, that I may perish like the oak  
Struck by the lightning's splendour and consumed,

Or, like a flower broken, pour my soul  
In fragrant harvest at the feet of Death.

*28th March, 1914.*

## THE FESTIVAL OF SPRING

ZEUS as of yore  
Descended to earth,  
And Earth, awakened  
Breathed in the scent  
Of the Seed of Life,  
And waxed, and teemed.  
Then once again  
The Father of all  
Kissed tenderly  
The pregnant earth,  
In the storm-wind and rain,  
And raised once more  
His mighty arms  
Aloft to Hera.  
But Demeter, now  
Alone yet living,  
And all the air  
Grew warm and blossoms  
Budded, and days  
Followed mild days,  
And Helios rose  
With growing power,  
To woo and kiss  
The blushing daughter of Zeus.  
Now moths fluttering, untwine  
Their close embrace.  
And butterflies, tiger-bright,  
Quivering, unite

## THE FESTIVAL OF SPRING

One with another, on the azure bells  
Of the wild hyacinths and on the clover  
Breathing honey ; the crickets clasp each  
other

Trembling they glitter and chirp, trembling  
engender,

And like the birds and beasts, the Gods are  
glad.

Aphrodite kisses and Helios too,  
Scarce they know whom ! But slender  
Artemis,

She Apollo's sister, bathing her firm  
Fleet and glittering body in the woodland  
pools,

She laughing aloud, rushed gaily past,  
Breaking love's net—but ye indeed believed  
Blindly, that fawns fled by, under the oaks.

*Whitrun, 1914.*

## THE FESTIVAL OF SUMMER

NAKED the splendour glows  
Of the solstitial days,  
In the sapphire air  
Lambent, the rays vibrate.  
Does not the very grass  
Smile at His touch and tread—  
God of Fire and Song !

High over the groaning land  
Laughing, he flings aloft  
Sheer, his resplendent Form.  
Then, in wilful play  
He bends his shimmering glance  
On the earth, that lies,  
All abandoned and crouched  
Trembling, neath grass and tree.

Then he is caught and drawn  
By the aroma of earth,  
Scent of blossom and leaf,  
And, like a butterfly,  
Reeling with colour and light  
Slowly, downwards he floats.

Naked his splendour glows :  
Breath of the God of Fire,  
Breath of the God of Song.

*18th July, 1914.*



## AFTERNOON ON THE BZURA

FORGOTTEN torment and dismay  
And battles' whirling thunder : sweet  
With blue and green and gold the day,  
And we rode, naked at our play,  
Into the river at our feet.

The kisses of the ripples fell  
On throat and limb ; we sang and played  
We chased and sprang, we swung and swayed  
As in our Boyhood's wilful spell.

The Sun god towered and shone and smiled.  
Is he not Boy himself ? and oft  
His moods are wanton fierce and wild,  
But then, with glittering fingers soft

He stroked and dried tired limbs. And then  
All shining in the summer's day,  
The champing steeds and laughing men,  
Rode together, back again,  
Among the blossoms, from their play.

*9th June, 1915.*

### CHRISTMAS, 1916

For the first time, since I bore arms  
My soul's invaded by strange fears,  
And melancholy's treacherous charms.

No craven I ; but my mind peers  
Towards the sunset, for my home,  
And mine eyes brim with bitter tears.

To-day when joy and comfort come  
To all our race, I pine and grieve,  
What shall it bring me, here ? I roam

Far from my home and parents dear,—  
They too will feel this lonely hour ;  
But soft ! They send their heart's love here,

Across the battle and the wild,  
Across the future, as the past :  
And Hope and Love endure at last,  
Linked as the Mother, to the Child.

### A MEMORY OF DRESDEN

THE chestnut's crimson candles glow,  
The pale cascades of lilac flow  
    Athwart the leaves—a foam of scent !

And see Our Lady's Church arise  
A song in stone, to greet our eyes  
    Against the sapphire firmament.

Palace and Temple sing to-day  
To Mozart's witching music. Play  
    Is Love's Companion, Love renewed.

Grief slinks back soon ! But Grief shall flee  
For one brief hour's ecstasy  
    And unalloyed beatitude.

*28th May, 1917.*

### IT WAS TO BE

THE gift thou gavest, thou hast taken away.

It was to be.

To thee a moment's play—

And the whole sunshine of my life to me.

Go hence I will not pray, I will not plead,

In loneliness.

My fate—the ashes of the flaming deed ;

Thine—happiness.

1917.

## DEDICATION

WHEN dead my Mother lay  
Thy tender arm  
Clasped me, and since that day  
Has kept from harm.

Thou messenger of Heaven !  
May blessings flow.  
On thee ! My trust is given,  
In Weal and Woe,

To thee. Although afar  
I feel thy sway,  
In this grim den of war,  
That happy day

When last I saw thy face,  
Keeps glad and strong,  
And thy prayers summon grace  
My lifetime long.

Fair joy I owe to thee ;  
When I return  
My faith eternally  
Shall steadfast burn.

For happy Life and Whole  
Can bring to light  
What lives deep in thy soul,—  
All witching—bright.

## DEDICATION

Such happiness be thine !  
May I not know,  
Returning to Thy shrine  
That fate is so ?

Life wakes—when sleep is fled—  
Beyond compare  
Where thine eyes' light is shed  
All fragrant fair.

*26th January, 1918.*

## DIVINE SERVICE

GIVE Soul and Service, Speech and Strife  
Unto a God who rules thy days,  
And moulds thy warm and stubborn life  
To deathless use and power and praise.

But deem not that for anguished weeping,  
Or Song's melodious call—He'll leave  
His silent sanctuary's keeping,  
To help and comfort them that grieve.

He is no wise and tender Mother  
To soothe the burning of Life's smart.  
Shouldst thou not perish, as another,  
But for the iron in thine heart ?

Fear not and faint not. On ! and over  
Hunger and terror, wrath and jest.  
In growth and work thou shalt discover  
His glorious Presence, manifest.

*January, 1918.*

# EROS AND PSYCHE

FIVE SCENES

•

*Variation on a Motif from Apuleius*





## PRAYER BEFORE THE SONG

God of all songs and all grand melodies,  
And rhythm and rhyme reverberant that roll  
From harpstrings smitten : ceaselessly my spirit  
Strives for thy glory ; ceaselessly I beat  
Fluttering, my callow wings.

Oh leave me not ! For I have ever felt  
The aura of thy presence : but now, deign  
To glance toward me, with thy lustrous eyes  
Whose splendour is more vivid than the flame  
Of cyclic Comets. Give to my desire  
The fragrant coolness of thy breath divine,  
Rhythmic in graceful measure, lyric sweet  
And prayer primæval ; welling, clear and deep  
Out of the soul that sings.

Now I await, oh pilgrim of the skies,  
Whate'er thy favor brings.

*PERSONÆ*

PAN	EUPHROSYNE
PSYCHE	APHRODITE
DEMETER	REAPERS
EROS	GIRLS
HERMES	

## FIRST SCENE

*Morning. PAN, then PSYCHE*

*PAN (playing on a shawm)*

The willows lap me with whispers and shadows, the  
crickets

Laugh with my laughter,  
The butterflies' wings and the ants and the bees in the  
thickets

Dance to my laughter,  
And all the young faunkins, so frisky and shaggy and  
fleet

That sport in the forest,  
And the hares and the deer and the squirrels—all  
flock round the feet  
Of the Lord of the forest.

*(Enter PSYCHE)*

**PSYCHE**

The nymph whose rustling reeds with shade attend  
Each tranquil reach and rippling sinuous bend  
Of this pure river, in her circling arm  
Here to thy feet has carried me from harm.  
Thou knowest the Forest's voice, Woodman Divine,  
The Forest's breath of life is breath of thine,  
And in the summer when the twilight falls  
Thy frolic mood with potent summons calls

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Swift birds and golden bees and forest flowers  
To joyous commune of immortal hours.  
I come to seek thy help, a fledgling shy  
That twitters in the dust with feeble wing ;  
For all too human am I ; heavy with grief  
And weary with long weeping. My bright falcon,  
Whose claws are glittering gold, whose scythe-sharp  
beak  
Is living pride of force—has slipped mine hand  
And vanished heavenward, with a dreadful cry  
Of wrath, and searing eyes of flame.

Oh ! know'st not  
Oh Father Pan, know'st not the way he went ?  
His plumage is more dazzling than the snow,  
Naught living shall escape his swoop, nor slake  
His thirst for blood, warm-welling from the heart.  
But scarce a month ago he rested with me ;—  
Where shall I find him now ?

## PAN

Oh delicate lapwing ! tender mourning thrush  
Whose grief is shot with graces manifold !  
Seek not the insatiate god that fled thine arms,  
Weep not for him whose flight has torn my woods  
With anguish cataclysmic, silencing  
The songs and laughter of my birds and elves.  
In wrath he came and, like the lightning, passed.  
The ether scorched and quiver'd, that the birds  
Fell dead to earth, the cypress, cloven, crashed,

## EROS AND PSYCHE

And emerald ivy, clasping Daphne close  
As foam clasps Thetis, shrivelled in the flame.  
His cry was as a knife-stroke in our breasts,  
We staggered and fell prone ; and he, who rent  
His bosom and his pinions, pain and fury  
Incarnate, incommensurate, primordial—  
Sought in the clouds, all stained with red—his shrine.  
See, even now, the nimble-footed goats  
With impish amber eyes, aloof and cold,  
Move languidly, and the tits' glancing flight  
Is stilled : yea, even I, in scented shade  
Of oaks, deep-foliaged and iron-thewed,  
Have scarcely won my merry mood once more.

## PSYCHE

Thou Father of the Woods !  
Forgive my deed ; forgive, but let me say  
That I repent not, even now. Oh rapture  
Of those swift shaken minutes when I lifted  
The lamp and saw ! The splendour of his limbs  
Stretched in abandonment of sleep, lay lightly  
Across the Tyrian couch. His arms were nested  
In the gold-glorious plumage of his hair,  
And his broad breast, arched like an Arab steed's,  
Moved with the even pulsing of his breath.  
The fairest work the Graces ever wrought  
His body's curve and slender shimmering power  
And perfect feet so peerless in pursuit  
So pitiless in flight ! that, from the couch

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Had slipped to earth. Ah, that I did not raise  
Mine eyes and see his face ! His form alone  
I knew and worshipped. Fear and shame had flown.

PAN

And did'st thou leave him, in a strange alarm ?

PSYCHE

Nay, Woodman God, the power of his arm  
Enlaced me, held me helpless as a babe.  
And then—his eyelids quivered, opened wide,  
And from his eyes' unfathomable heaven,  
Two searing flames pierced to my deepest soul.  
And like a fallen sheaf, I sank to earth,  
And waited, dumbly, crouching, for my doom.  
Then, in one movement, arms and pinions wide,  
He flung and spurned the earth and silent soared  
Beyond the summits of the hills, until  
Between the clouds and starlight, I could glimpse  
A solitary falcon with a cry  
Of wrath and desolation, beyond thought—  
But my heart's love is deeper—

PAN

Oh lovely child,  
Child still in thy bright, lofty, far-flung dreams—  
Stay in this wood ! Stay and be happy here.  
The leaves shall lisp and laugh to thee ; the fays  
Shall brush thee with their glancing wings ; the  
nymphs

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Welcome their fairest sister to their sport,  
As queen and friend and playmate, tenderly  
Sharing each fleeting pang, each joy renewed.

### PSYCHE

Each word of thine, Great Pan, is law to me,  
How gladly would I bring thee gifts and bend  
In homage at thy feet ! But oh ! I pray thee,  
By Daphnis' love, thy shepherd-boy's, have mercy,  
And let me search the world for him I love.  
And I entreat thee, by thy Daphnis' kiss,  
And by thy care for bird and moth and bee,  
And all small things, and pilgrims of the air—  
And by thy friendship that has never failed  
The seeing soul that trusted !—lead me thence,  
By sure and secret pathway, to the slopes  
Olympian, where, among the gods, he thrones !  
No harm can touch me : lovers are the lamps  
That hold the light that was before the world !  
And the gods lift them, skywards !

### PAN

Wondrous girl,

When thou in silent sorrow, drewest nigh,  
I thought to aid a tender trembling fawn ;  
Now, like a goddess's, thy parting gait,  
Most gladly will I lead thee, in thy quest  
Through mountain passes and o'er crumbling crests  
Of perilous heights to where Demeter reigns.  
And I would counsel courage to thine heart,



## EROS AND PSYCHE

Shone it not there already. Rain and tempest  
Will visit thee and many a thorn shall tear  
Thy feet, more delicate and proudly sure  
Than a gazelle's, thy body's lustrous skin  
Perfumed with languid unguents, sandalwood,  
And peach-like odour of the gorse in bloom,  
And the pale honeysuckle's subtle spell—  
Shall darken with the burden of the sun,  
Thy flawless hands shall labour painfully  
That once were tended by Egyptian slaves.  
But when in bitter anguish thou dost weep,  
I shall be near thee, and when weariness  
Weighs leaden on thine eyelids—all my leaves  
Shall shelter thee, and all my birds shall sing  
Happiness down the white ways of thy dreams.

Go Godlike one ! thy ways  
Be blessed, all thy days.

## SECOND SCENE

*Before the Temple of Demeter. Full noon.*

PSYCHE (*alone*)

Mother, mighty and mild,  
Soul of the waving wheat,  
Gold of the budding ear,  
Fruit of the swelling earth  
Smiling in joy and grace !  
When in the votive glow  
Of noonday, in Summer's prime,

HOW

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Helios embraces thy form,—  
How dost thou blush and expand,  
Fragrant as peach and vine !

Mother mighty and mild  
Often thine eyes are wet,  
Brimming for her, thy child,  
Even as thy heavy breasts.  
When the autumnal trees  
Flare with the promise bright  
Of other springs, unborn,  
Sorrow enwraps thy soul ;  
Far from the feet of men,  
Far from the lucent sky,  
Secretly shrined, apart.  
Weepest thou shimmering tears,  
Tears, for thy ravished child.

Mother, mighty and mild,  
Mother in joy and pain !  
Make for me and my child  
Shelter here till again,  
Forth we fare to the wild.  
Give me a bearing-bed ;  
Give, for that downy head  
But one resting-place small !  
Goddess tender and dread,  
How shall I thank thee for all ?

May my undaunted prayer  
Win thy guerdon and grace ?

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Here will I rest, and spare  
Feet that totter and burn,  
Here, in thy holy place.

*(She falls asleep)*

*(As she sleeps in the shadow of a cypress  
at the steps of Demeter's temple,  
enter REAPERS and GIRLS)*

FIRST REAPER

Hither, the sheaves !

OTHER REAPERS

We come.

FIRST GIRL *(carrying a sheaf)*

See the red wealth of poppies Pyrrha brought !

THIRD GIRL

And here the sapphire cornflowers break mine arms.

FIRST REAPER

Weave them to garlands for the pillared porch  
And dazzling roof-tree of Demeter's fane.

SECOND REAPER

Forget *us* not !

SECOND GIRL

Have we so, ever' ?

SECOND REAPER

Rogue,

Mischievous rogue ! Not *us* indeed—but *me*.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### FIRST REAPER

This year the seed bears fruit an hundredfold,  
And brings us golden profit.

### PRIESTESS

Therefore—praise  
And double crowns of wheat and flowers to her  
Who gives the fruitful Earth's increase ! Give gar-  
lands  
To deck Demeter's altar.

### THIRD GIRL

Even now  
I heard him jest with Phyllis.

### SECOND GIRL

Is't a crime ?

### THIRD GIRL

I'll rate him soundly—and no kiss for him !

### SECOND REAPER

Till when ? How long the teen ?

### THIRD REAPER

Spake Hermes so ?  
Promising him that found the fugitive  
Seven nectar kisses of the Cyprian Queen ?

### SECOND GIRL

Oh fie ! To talk of kisses and not kiss !

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### FIRST REAPER

What nymph sleeps 'neath the cypress ? Like a  
queen's  
Her mien ; but lo ! her torn and bleeding feet.

### FOURTH REAPER

Behold her !

### FIRST GIRL

See how fair she is, and young !  
How sweet the smile that flits across her face ;  
Lit at some rapturous dream !

### THIRD REAPER

How's this ? The bracelet  
The token Aphrodite named ! 'Tis Psyche !  
Softly ! that these steal not our prize away.

### FIRST REAPER

Base slave, with impious deed our feast profaning—  
Back ! Touch her not !

### THIRD REAPER

Tush ! Empty words and vain !

### FOURTH REAPER

Sooth he speaks well, and I would rather one  
Kiss on the crimson petals of her mouth,  
Than seven of the Cyprian !

*(Exit into the Temple).*

## EROS AND PSYCHE

THIRD REAPER

Idle dreamer !

Mine is the prize.

FIRST GIRL

Sisters ! List and help :

Yon sweet defenceless slumberer is Psyche.

The Cyprian, like an eagle, seeks her life-blood,

And *he* would sell her—

THIRD GIRL

Fie ! The huckstering villain !

See, I will crown her with my azure wreath.

THIRD REAPER

Light chattering covey ! Would ye stay my hand ?

Hence ! to the Temple's shelter.

*(He thrusts them aside.)*

VOICES FROM THE TEMPLE

Touch her not !

THE GIRLS

Hail to our Goddess !

THIRD REAPER

Ah ! I am stricken blind !

*(He staggers out.)*

CHORUS OF GIRLS

Glorious Goddess

Great among Mothers !

## EROS AND PSYCHE

We bend before thee,  
See we adore thee.  
Bring us to flower,  
Radiantly blooming,  
Then, richly burdened,  
Ripe to the harvest,  
Let us bear fruit.

Help her, Oh Goddess !  
Is she not lovely ?  
Is she not fertile ?  
Thou hast preserved her ;  
Now to her lover,  
Like a swift pigeon  
Safe, let her fly.  
We with our singing,  
Playing and praying,  
We will placate  
Paphian anger.  
Come we entreat thee,  
Glorious Goddess,  
Mother and Queen.

*(Enter DEMETER from the Temple.)*

### DEMETER

Thy silent prayer was intertwined  
With these clear songs before my throne.  
Awake, and speak thy heart to me,  
As to a mother, found again.  
As the first breath of Summer's flowers—  
Red rose and amber jessamine

## EROS AND PSYCHE

And glowing gorse—is exquisite,  
So soft, so pure thy sleeping prayer ;  
As soft and pure as western winds  
Whispering through beechwoods in the dawn,  
Awake ! and tell me all thy need.

### PSYCHE

Does the sun stoop above my couch  
In ripe and stately woman's form ?  
Goddess, my dream was all of Death,  
An ancient, noble and serene,  
Wisdom and Peace in his deep eyes.  
How great, how kind, he seemed ! My soul  
Yearned for his spacious tranquil realm.  
And so, methought, my destined way  
Led through the shadows to thy child.  
Then, suddenly, and crystal clear—  
More shrill and gay than birds that wake—  
A call rang from thy holy fane,  
And at that call my womb was thrilled  
By the first stirring of my child,  
And Death and Dream together fled  
Before the Mother and the Babe.

### DEMETER

Athene's strength in symmetry  
And proud defiant curve of lips,  
Is mirrored in thy mortal face,  
And a new star, out of the night,  
Among the goddesses, is born.



## EROS AND PSYCHE

Even now, thou wert a tender child,  
So timid and so torn with fears !  
Now, like a Daughter of the Gods,  
Lofty and strong in loveliness,  
And meeting me with level eyes.

### PSYCHE

Oh royal Goddess, let thy mockery  
That stings my pride, turn into gentle pity,  
Nor wound me, helpless, further ! As a friend  
Thou did'st appear before me, graciously  
Seeking to know my sorrow's cause. Then know  
That I love Eros, who has loved me well,  
And given me a child that I still carry  
Under my heart, and left me then in wrath  
A crying falcon, soaring o'er the hills.  
If I dare speak of this, my sacred joy  
And sacred sorrow, 'tis but that thy grace  
May stoop to me and—dare I ask it ?—lead me  
Into his presence, whom I sometimes see  
In dreams, against the azure vault of Heaven,  
Wandering, like Helios, through the firmament  
And then I bow before the incarnate god.  
Again in lonely nights, when after fears  
Have chilled my soul at ebb, desire's tide  
Lifts me again to him, I seem to see  
A youth, more comely than all sons of men,  
Kneeling before me, and he clasps my hands  
Upon his honey-coloured crown of curls.  
Ah, then I melt with keener ecstasy

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Than when of yore, with flattery and jest  
He lay by me in the syringa's shade !  
Thine eyes, Demeter, question : is this all ?  
Oh when my flaming heart has swooned itself  
Into his arms again—when no least leaf  
May fall but floats towards him, in my sight,  
When all the universe is lit and vibrant  
With my love's ardour—suddenly the child  
Stirring within me, swings my rapture sheer  
From Eros to that little unseen form,  
And passion's tumult merges into Peace.  
Yet, when I long for tiny hands that press  
Against my breasts as in the forest depths  
The fawns and foxlets lull their dams asleep—  
Oft have I gazed upon them noiselessly  
In joy unspeakable—Ah, then his face  
Once more before me rises, and two flames  
Of mate and mother-love together glow  
Into one glory, as twin rivers flow  
Into one ocean.

### DEMETER

When thy pride serene  
And noble candour I at first beheld  
Dear girl, I held thee worthy of mine aid.  
Now in the flawless mirror of thy speech  
Unnamed yet radiant, Aphrodite thrones,  
My equal sister and co-regnant queen,  
Who holds a potent sway o'er all my servants,  
And thanks and friendship bind my favour to thee.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Yet watch, and wary be thy graceful pride,  
And keen thy vision ; for in sooth, my Psyche  
From crimson blood the Paphian Queen was born !  
Crimson and smoking were the waves that cradled  
And swept her shorewards : should her net enmesh  
thee

Pray to all gods, and to all worthy men,  
And all dumb grateful creatures of the wild,  
That they may save thee from her.

PSYCHE

Willingly

Will I endure anguish and weariness.  
For every morning Eros' breath renews  
My life and hope that I behold him soon,  
Thanks now to thee, Mother. Hold, hold thine  
hands  
O'er the mysterious burden of my womb,  
That I may flourish like the fragrant field  
After the freshness of the silver rain.

## THIRD SCENE

(*Afternoon. EROS and HERMES*)

EROS

I tremble to thy speech, as water stirred  
Swirls and grows dark with earth. So I, with fears,  
Fears that thy message, Brother, may dispel ?

HERMES

Eros, how gladly would I reassure  
Thy fears, could I accuse Apollo's self

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Who lies not, whom we gods ourselves revere.  
But in the Delphic shrine, he answered thus :  
" On either bank of Acheron, stands Psyche  
In double semblance. Aphrodite laughs,  
Yet Eros stretches joyful arms towards her."

EROS

His words are darker than the waves of Styx.  
Can'st thou add naught of comfort ?

HERMES

Yea, I sought  
Long in the fields of Dis, and found——

EROS

More riddles ?

HERMES

Nay, light and help.

EROS

I know thou did'st discourse  
With Euphrosyne ?

HERMES

And she told me all.

EROS

Thy kisses tuned the music of her mouth  
To Pythian wisdom ?

HERMES

Wilt thou not hear my message ?

## EROS AND PSYCHE

EROS

Zeus has forbidden Cypris to destroy  
My Psyche !

HERMES

Even so.

EROS

The world of shades ?

HERMES

I have searched through all its ways.

EROS

My Mother's cunning ?

HERMES

Had set a cruel trap to slay thy love—  
Self-slain.

EROS

Speak ! speak ! I listen.

HERMES

Paphos' Queen,  
The foam-born Aphrodite, seething as  
The sea in wrath, that through the kindly beasts,  
The little friends and playmates of her days—  
Psyche had twice escaped her murderous wiles ;—  
Has spun a web more deadly than the grave,  
And sent thy deep-eyed girl for Beauty's gift  
To Proserpina, but, in sooth, the casket  
She bears, encloses deathless sleep eternal  
That only Aphrodite's spell can break.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### EROS

I know her crafty guile. Oh dear, my friend,  
Still smarts my wound and festers, and my hand  
Is stayed from helping her. Do thou, for me  
Support her, lead her, keep her feet from falling,  
Be at her side, to counsel and to save,  
My beauteous brother, comrade of my soul,  
Thee only I rely on to conduct her  
Out of the darkness to the realms of day,  
And to unite her, once again, with me.  
Here, take my arrows, Euphrosyne's thine,—  
Thou lovest her—take them all, the quiver full,  
All, all are thine. My shield of beaten gold  
Enwrought with all the devious ways of love,  
My helm, with horrent crest of gorgon's hair,  
My knife with agate hilt, where sapphires gleam,—  
Take what thou wilt—Thy silence strangles me !  
Thou dost refuse my prayer ?

### HERMES

Had I the power  
Oh my love-maddened friend, whose mocking calm  
Was wont to plague me—had I known myself  
To have that power—I had thrown at once  
Oil on thy passion's storm, with glad consent.  
But all my power is guidance and clear sight  
On the wise path, to skirt the threatening doom.  
Her part with fearless tread is to go forth  
Before me, balance in harmonious poise.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

EROS

Naught canst thou counsel that she cannot do !

HERMES

And could I counsel her beyond her strength ?

EROS

I scorn thy jests ! For in her face the flaws—  
For such there are—are mirrored to my soul  
Lovelier than loveliness. So on the snow  
Of poet's parchment, red and gold enwrought  
In gorgeous arabesques, at first impair  
The majesty of his immortal words,  
Then clothe them with a robe of royal colour.  
For vanity and curiosity,  
And careless wilfulness at first disturb,  
Yet twine themselves with such a girlish grace  
And gaiety around her, that all hearts  
Smile at her archness, with no word of blame.

HERMES

Myself I smile, when she—as even now—  
In the warm glow of the declining sun  
Lay down to sleep ; then woke and hesitant  
Gazed at herself in all her beauty deckt.  
Yet her eyes told us that from thee alone  
She willed the heady homage of desire.

EROS

Thou speak'st such words of consolation, friend,  
That the fierce pain is slackened at my heart.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

More comfort ! More ! I have been an-hungered  
long.

Tell me of her ! Does not her lustre shine  
From the deep shadowed fountains of her eyes ?  
Does not her spirit ripen with her form  
To proud maturity and richest hope ?  
I know it well—and yet would gladly hear  
The praise of her whom thou dost gladly praise.

### HERMES

I knew her not before thy love fulfilled  
Her destiny ; but, if she were as shy  
And supple and elusive as a nymph,  
And graceful as Aglaia's self and melting  
In amorous tenderness—ah, now indeed  
Scarce would'st thou know her ! In her dazzling  
eyes

The majesty of the world's proudest queen,  
Her mouth two bands of rubies set with pearl  
When her lips, smiling, part ; and every step  
Of her harmonious walk is graciousness  
And calm completion.

### EROS

Even so I saw her  
When first I stood before her, hidden from her,  
But with my breath inspiring her whole soul,  
And she bent back, entrancingly aware  
Of love, indeed more lovely and divine  
Than ever golden Cypris, Paphos' Queen.



## EROS AND PSYCHE

### HERMES

Thy sight can penetrate the thickest walls  
And worship Psyche with unflagging joy  
In every gesture, every moment ; yet  
With wrath and bitterness alone it meets  
The foam-white Aphrodite. Oh, believe me,  
She is the sport and victim of a dream.  
Into her heart that like a dawn-rose shell  
Held all the laughing music of the sea,  
And all the rhythmic pulsing of the tides—  
There broke one day the ancient ocean black  
With might and fury, lashing ruin high  
To the cliffs' haughtiest height.

### EROS

Maybe,—maybe.

### HERMES

Psyche alone thou seest, hearest, knowest ?

### EROS

Yea, even so : over the purple sea  
Triumphant through all lands, from furthest ice  
To where the desert and the jungle meet  
The sun's full power—love at surging flood  
Fills all the universe and I am one  
With tree and flower, river and mountain peak,  
And bird and beast, each in their several kind  
The subjects and the vessels of my will.  
Behold, a captive slave in ardent youth

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Kneels at his lovely mistress' feet, in shame  
At conquest, yet the shame is lost in love.  
The thought torments, yet 'witches : I compare  
His fate to mine, lapped in delicious pain,  
Anon the pain dissolves in tenderest peace,  
I dream that in the dawning and the dew  
We pace the meadows, talking, side by side.  
Thou smilest, Hermes ? Idle boyish sport  
Deem'st thou my joy ? Dost thou not ache and  
thrill

Responsive to the climax and the crest  
Of nature's life-wave ? Even as a cloud,  
A slate-black storm-cloud piled and grimly poised  
Athwart the zenith, pours its brooding load  
In gush of glittering rain-drops, on the parched  
And yearning earth : even as the iron plough  
That, thirsting, thrusts and tears the earth's brown  
flesh ;

Even as the merging of the land and sea  
That kiss and kiss with every flowing tide—  
Even so my love. A shore where timelessly  
Two waves unite that nothing shall divide,  
Where Heaven echoes back the ecstasy  
That quickens every lover, every bride.

EROS. HERMES. EUPHROSYNE

EUPHROSYNE

Fair youths, I would not break upon your converse  
But harsh is Aphrodite's mood and drives  
Like the east wind her girls on her behests.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

EROS

And wherefore has she sent thee hither ?

EUPHROSYNE

Hermes

She summons and insistently ; but ever  
Sways in a stormy mood from Yea to Nay.

HERMES

Sets she new snares ?

EUPHROSYNE

Her wrath is doubly deep  
That naught, till now, avails her.

EROS

And Apollo ?

He—lied ?

HERMES

Friend, thy wits wander ! Sweetest Grace,  
The Delphian God saw Psyche on Acheron.

EUPHROSYNE

Living or dead ?

EROS

Living—with your protection.

HERMES

Hark then ! as Fate is ineluctable,  
Prevail upon the goddess—

EROS

Oh my frenzy  
Foams as the wild bull's fury when he feels  
The yoke upon his shoulders—

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### HERMES

Yea, a child,  
A child art thou with seventeen useless years !

### EUPHROSYNE

Nay, blame him not ! He feels a double pang.

### HERMES

Dear charity, if thine the subtle plan—  
The goddess will permit thy care to frame  
Each link—

### EUPHROSYNE

Enough, my friend—I understand !  
But must then Aphrodite be cast down  
To utter grief and desperate defeat ?

### HERMES

Nay ! fear it not. Never ! Is not her grace  
The whole world's light and perfume ? Is she not  
Tender to thee and us ?

### EROS

Through your joint help,  
My fears are quieted and my blood at peace.

### HERMES

Nay, be not thus !

### EROS

And wherefore ?

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### HERMES

Dear my friend,  
Until I see thee soaring through the air,  
And radiant in the battle-rain of spears,  
I languish.

### EROS

And if hunger's self oppressed thee  
Believe me, I would pour ambrosial wine,  
For my deep wound is healed! My arms shall  
splinter  
All prison bars. When Psyche rises, rosier  
Than fair Aurora, with Acheron's water  
Dripping from hair and rounded hip and slender  
Ankle and wrist—then she shall find me ringing  
In panoply of arms, all helmet-crowned,  
Victorious in camp and court and wood!  
As falcon eyed as when I first beheld her,  
As passionate as when I pleased her first!  
My hair shall flutter in the storm-wind's rush  
And swifter than the storm, my deep desire!  
Even as the perfume of a thousand springs,  
Even as the lightning flash that burns the forest.—  
And ye—I have reliance on your aid;  
Lend me your strength, your wisdom and your  
sweetness  
And blend, in supreme victory, every shade  
Of joy and beauty, to the soul's completeness.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### FOURTH SCENE

*(Evening. APHRODITE resting on a couch; surrounded by Graces and Loves. EUPHROSYNE kneels beside her.)*

APHRODITE

Now, give thy counsel ! Not the birds alone,  
But ants and bees and all the whispering leaves  
Gather round Psyche's feet and screen her brow,  
Happy if they may help her. Oh, the shame !

EUPHROSYNE

Lady and Goddess, if I still may speak,  
I know a way to soothe thy fiery pain.

APHRODITE

Is't mockery ? Peace ! Is't helpful counsel ?  
Speak !

EUPHROSYNE

Naught would I shun more than to mock at thee.

APHRODITE

Could I believe 'twere so—but I ask help.

EUPHROSYNE

And I to help thee.—Lo the beasts protect her,  
The gods preserve her with their secret power.  
But could not Psyche's self slay Psyche's self  
With her own hand, if thou couldst make her mad ?

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### APHRODITE

Oh precious coolness of the evening's breath !  
I laugh again—but more ! reveal thy plan.

### EUPHROSYNE

Thou knowest, Cypris : curiosity,  
The quick and teasing wonder of a child,  
Not fear it was, that moved her to behold  
Eros, the Dragon of her sister's tales.

### APHRODITE

I know it—lazy sluggards, worthless knaves !  
The air weighs heavier than at solstice—yet  
Ostrich and peacock plumes stand stiff like lances !  
Fan me !

### EUPHROSYNE

Thou knowest that her slim body's wounds  
And bruises hurt her heart. As her child's temple,  
Sacred she deems it ; and has—other hopes.

### APHRODITE

Say on ! Say on ! Ah, many hearts have hoped  
Ere Psyche's did, and hoped in vain. But look !  
The silver feet of evening pace the sea,  
The languid waves are amorous of the shore,  
And the gold crescent of the moon, new born !

### EUPHROSYNE

So, full of wonder, and that vanity  
Sprightly and tender that makes loveliness  
Lovelier, and grace more graceful—

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### APHRODITE

Shameless slave !  
Durst thou to praise her whom my Godhead loathes ?  
Hence, snake ! Remain, have I permitted thee  
To leave my presence ?

### EUPHROSYNE

Even now, I thought  
Thou didst command it.

### APHRODITE

How ye weary me,  
Hucksters with words, as merchants with dull coin  
Peace, interrupt not ! Well I know you all,  
Ye are enamoured of this stripling boy,  
He is your master whom I held but now  
A babe against my breast—What, tears again ?  
Tears and reproachful faces, pale and sad—  
And once my dancing girls, my flute girls fair !  
Now busy reckoners, counting up the years  
That he has lived and smiled and conquered—Oh  
My memory wakes and counts those happy years  
Serene from ingrate son and witless maids  
When in my Temple's shrine I ruled *alone*.—  
Help ! help ! the air is blackened and my heart  
Stands still with fury—

### EUPHROSYNE

Hither ! Swiftly bring  
Sweet wine of Chios ! Let Aglaia pour



## EROS AND PSYCHE

Kneeling and raise it to our mistress' lips.  
Her smile is turned to stone.

APHRODITE

My smile, alas !  
Hast heard the poets praise it ? and my lips  
As roses in the terraces that drop  
Towards Persepolis, and my cheek's blush,  
The sunset on the Alpine snows ?

EUPHROSYNÉ

We need  
No poet's fancies while our eyes have thee.

APHRODITE

Ay—couldst thou find none other hour than this  
For flattery and covert laughter ?—Lo  
New music will I teach you all : the songs  
Of Sappho, bitter with her burning heart  
And sombre with the shadow of her eyes—  
Shall be as serenades of love fulfilled  
Compared to those wild shrieks that shall re-echo  
Sobbing and dying in an eerie anguish  
From this mine isle ! If Lesbos' cliffs have rung  
With Sapphic sorrow, then the world shall quiver  
Writhing in agony and die—with mine.

EUPHROSYNÉ

Apollo purge and help her soul ! Aglaia,  
Wine, swiftly !

## EROS AND PSYCHE

APHRODITE

Give it me, the cup of gold.  
The night has fallen. Boy ! the leopard-skin !  
I am cold. How sleek and warm the mottled sheath  
Of that swift life and strong ! 'Mayst kiss my hand  
As a reward. He loves to kiss it, still !  
Go now, go all—Euphrosyne, remain !

EUPHROSYNE

Gladly, my Queen.

APHRODITE

Fill up the goblet ! Dear,  
I hurt thee—is't not so ?

EUPHROSYNE

Hurt me again  
And more, an thou so wilt.

APHRODITE

I would not, child,  
And yet—I must. Come sit thee here beside me.  
How thy fresh lips smile peace and healing to me !

EUPHROSYNE

I hearken to thy words. But oh ! for pity  
Look not so cruelly.

APHRODITE

Fret not, but listen.  
If once again I should forget myself

## EROS AND PSYCHE

As utterly as I but now forgot—  
Stand by my side and hold me back ! Go now  
And summon Psyche.

EUPHROSYNE

Goddess——

APHRODITE

Didst thou hear me ?

(APHRODITE alone. *Re-enter EUPHROSYNE at once, leading PSYCHE.*)

PSYCHE

I had come without thy call as soon as with it :  
What dost desire of me ?

APHRODITE

It is my custom

Myself to question those who come before me :  
They wait my words in silence.

PSYCHE

The reproof

Might profit thoughtless children.

APHRODITE

She will force me—

Stay Phroso ! Girl, I have resolved to banish  
Eros from earth !

PSYCHE

Why not to bind the ocean  
In iron fetters ? Thou appall'st me not.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

APHRODITE

Wine !—I will tame thy spirit till it lies  
Before me in the dust.

PSYCHE

And Eros lifts it  
With mighty arms even above his head !

APHRODITE

Oh impotent and miserable me !  
Cease to torment me with thy power accurst.  
Was't not enough that, in thy childhood's days  
When other maidens tost the ball in sport,  
Thou didst draw all my fickle worshippers  
Out of my temples to attend thy ways  
In homage ? That thou stol'st away my son,  
And smil'st to naught my menacing commands,  
And hast united the high Gods themselves  
With all the humble creatures of the earth  
To guardian legions, round thine impious head ?  
Must thou in mine own house and holy place  
Make mock of me, with cool gay shafts of scorn,  
That cut my heart like poisoned dagger-strokes—  
My heart where even now the anger ebb'd  
Responsive to my mother's heart, the sea's ?  
Oh leave me ! Go ! Must I be utterly  
Humiliated and cast down before thee ?  
Stand not so proudly, gaze not with such clear  
Unflinching eyes—Ah once again night falls  
Upon mine eyes ! I choke ! Euphrosyne !

## EROS AND PSYCHE

EUPHROSYNE

Wilt thou not reconcile thyself with her ?

APHRODITE

Support me, child, and give me power ! Psyche,  
Hast heard the Grace ?

PSYCHE

Goddess, I heard her words,  
With alien ears, incredulous. And yet,  
I tremble to the thought that thou shouldst shelter  
My babe here in thy sanctuary ; shouldst—  
Oh give me here thy jewelled hand as pledge—  
No longer grudge me, Eros ?

APHRODITE

It is bitter,  
Bitter as death, thy gentle counsel, Phroso !  
And my heart in the anguish of my pride  
Strains as the timbers of some venturous ship  
Beneath the rush of foaming seas, until  
At last—they splinter.

PSYCHE

Can I smooth the sea ?  
If mortals say I am thy peer, Oh Cypris,  
I will deny it—

APHRODITE

Oh that fatal word !  
Accursed art thou who hast uttered it.  
Now is all reconciliation past, all hand

## EROS AND PSYCHE

In hand and promise of linked arms and kisses.  
Zeus, Father ! Come to earth in dazzling snow !  
Grant me revenge—for am I not thy child ?—  
Upon this mortal wench, who now again  
Has mocked me, scorned me ! Shame, that I  
forgot  
But for one instant, melting, thine affronts,  
Thy sacrilege, and let myself be charmed—  
But for one instant—by thy siren spell !  
My curse upon thee, and eternally  
May ruin overwhelm thy child and thee !

## PSYCHE

Frightful as Harpyes and Alecto's sisters  
Thou threatenest and revilest. But the king  
Of Gods and men, and Demeter the Mother,  
Protect me ; and if Zeus descends like snow  
In answer to thy prayer, the thunderbolts  
Will pass me by, and lightning flash in play.  
To thee, All-Powerful, I raise my hands  
In prayer ! In the gold circle of the stars  
At rest in the night's sacred silences  
And watchful in noon's splendour—Father Zeus,  
Oh grant me Peace and grant me full fruition  
Of all desires ! Bring my child to birth,  
And bring me to my lover, garlanded  
As from a triumph over Persian pride  
And Parthian arrows !

*(Exit PSYCHE.)*

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### APHRODITE AND THE THREE GRACES

#### APHRODITE

Poor and full of woe  
And lamentation here she leaves me lying !  
Comfort me, girls ; and hope that once again—  
(Although at last Fate shall grant all her prayer)—  
But once, before she triumphs, I may prove  
My powers, and taste the joy of victory,  
And she may call upon my name, in vain !  
Then in the fragrant sanctuary's shade,  
In my high place in Paphos, clothed with pearls  
Amid the clouds of incense, fragrant nard  
And sandalwood—the homage of the world—  
Smiling and satiated, I shall sleep.

#### FIFTH SCENE

#### *Twilight at Dawn*

#### *Eros (alone)*

Zeus !  
Thou who commandest  
All lands of the Earth,  
All waters of Ocean :  
Suppliant, I mount to thy throne,  
Though myself divine.  
For mortals say vainly  
That all we Olympians  
All are omnipotent.  
Thou, thou alone,  
Choosest our ways ;

## EROS AND PSYCHE

With wonderful wisdom  
Guidest and ledest our feet :  
Thou, thou alone.  
Oh thou Lord of the Heavens,  
Of the thunder that roars and strikes,  
And the laughing translucent fathoms of blue  
Breathing peace and joy—  
Thou whose fleeting smile  
Strews all the meads with flowers, as the feet  
Of delicate slim Persephone set Hades  
A-bloom with white and amber-bright  
narcissi—  
Thou whose least nod  
Calms all the farthest seas, the wildest winds :—  
Thou whose face, I,  
Even I, tremble to see and bend before :—  
Oh, grant my prayer !

Zeus,  
My joy awoke  
And trumpets called me, that I broke the bars :  
And soared, to where Hermes, my comrade  
true  
Earthward my flight attended.  
But when I flung myself  
Beside her—on the meadow set around  
With arums and wild hyacinths and tulips  
Scarlet as heart's-blood—  
Father almighty,  
There mid the flowers, Psyche lay, asleep.



## EROS AND PSYCHE

Zeus,  
I am stricken to earth in anguish.  
Cypris alone,  
She, my mother, pitiless, she my destroyer,  
Cypris only can save,  
Save and restore me again  
Psyche, and loose the spell  
Binding the web of sleep.  
I have no words to plead,  
I have no breath to strive,  
Panting I faint and fall.  
Oh thou infinite Power,  
Nothing I ask but this,  
Nothing but this, alone :

Say to the savage Queen,  
Say to the Foam-born fell,  
That she shall spare my love !  
Say I will kneel at her feet,  
Say I will suffer and bleed,  
Say to the Slayer—Zeus !  
That she shall save my love !  
Woe is me ! even now  
Naught of thy breath I feel,  
Naught of thy voice I hear !  
Shall I perish and fade  
As the spring from the earth ?  
Grasses that whisper low  
In the wind from the west,  
Flies, that die in a day—

## EROS AND PSYCHE

These thou smil'st upon :  
These may rejoice in their hour.  
Shall I whom thou didst love,  
At one bend of thy brows,  
Perish in anguish and grief ?  
Or, may I soar on high  
Kneeling before thy throne,  
Wrapping thy neck with mine arm ?  
Oh ! The breeze fulfils,  
Floating swiftly, thy will,  
And I entrust myself  
Gladly to his broad wings,  
And on the breath of hope  
Enter thy presence dread,  
Shepherd of all the stars !

*(He floats upwards.)*

APHRODITE. PSYCHE.

PSYCHE

Thou hast awakened me ? I know thee not,  
The shadows droop over mine eyelids, still,  
The shadows of that sleep—was it Death's twin  
Or Death itself ? Slowly the night withdrew  
Th' impenetrable sable of her wings,  
But spread them till my cheek was stroked and stirred  
By downy pinions shudderingly soft  
And the deep note of silence rang remote,  
Darkness unfathomable, to the ear  
Made manifest. Once—long ago—a god  
Woke me from sleep ; and then again, my child

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Woke me—but now I know not to what end,  
Stranger compassionate ! Nor who thou art !

APHRODITE

Thou knewest me once.

PSYCHE

A poignant memory  
Of suffering long ago stirs to the day—  
My lids are weighed with slumber—

APHRODITE

I will free them !  
Thine eyes of emerald and of agate shine  
From their deep fringes ! Turn them to my brow  
With joy and triumph !

PSYCHE

Woe ! 'tis Aphrodite.

APHRODITE

Yea, joy and happiness attend thine eyes,  
And fill the double arches of thy lips,  
And clasp thee as a bath of milk and wine  
Falling in drops of purifying scent  
Of soothing oil and shimmering nard about thee !

PSYCHE

Thousand Aeolian harps vibrate around me—  
And in my breast such longing swells and beats  
That I almost believe thy gracious words.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### APHRODITE

Dost thou not feel, Beloved, in the stir  
Of the soft air of morning—soft as down—  
The breath of Eros ? Through the ether's blue  
In naked glory he approaches earth.  
The slender Dryads trembled, for they know  
His presence, and they stilled their elfin mirth.  
He touched the ripples of the Nereids' hair  
But lingered not. Soon will he kneel before thee,  
And thou mayest taste his homage, O most Fair,  
Queenlike and smile to let thy Lord adore thee.

### PSYCHE

Oh daughter of the waves !  
My hope believes thee.  
Pearl of strange seas and deep,  
My soul resounds  
Like flutes that call sweetly  
To dance and song,  
The songs and dances  
Of the slender graces  
When from the arms that trembled  
With his love—  
Even Okeanos' arms, thou didst arise  
Radiant with pearls and fragrant with the sea !  
Thy radiant head  
Hung like an opening flower,  
Heavy with dreams  
And shy with its own beauty

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Upon thy shoulder, when the lovely nymphs  
Attending thee and ministering to thee,  
Laid at thy feet the whole world's offering,  
Laughter and song, and scent and sheen of flowers.

Now lay thine hands upon my hair,  
And kiss my cheeks and kiss my brow :  
Demeter blessed me proud and fair—  
Now, therefore, thou !

Eros, thrice blessed, anon shall weave  
The dances' maze—and not alone,  
And we shall kneel ere fall of eve  
Before thy throne.

Be ever with us, Cyprian Queen,  
For all past pain is dreamed and done,  
Sun after storm, joy after teen,  
And our hearts one.

(DEMETER *appears*. APHRODITE  
*blesses PSYCHE. The two god-*  
*desses greet and kiss one another,*  
*and exit, embraced.*)

PSYCHE (*alone*)

The scent of tuberoses pours  
In soundless waves of sweetness rare,  
And the syringa and the flowers  
That open to the moon alone  
Make all the night a fragrant song.  
Dew-fresh, from West to East the wind  
Sways all the flowers towards the morn—

## EROS AND PSYCHE

But how is this ? A weight unknown  
Heavier than Saturn's leaden hand  
Presses upon my shoulders till  
I sway and nearly sink to earth !  
And now a giant shadow sweeps  
Across the sunrise—and I bend  
Before it—now a rushing wind—  
Zeus save me ! 'tis a falcon's flight  
That cleaves the air—my falcon's flight !

*(PSYCHE falls prone to earth. Songs  
rise from invisible spirits.)*

### THE VOICES OF THE AIR

Thou didst cast us down      Beneath thy feet,  
Even as the dust.  
We crouched together moaning—  
Thou didst pass on.

### THE VOICES OF THE WATERS

Rippling we greeted thee. But with what scorn  
Thou didst reject us.  
Sobbing we clung more closely—  
Thou didst pass on.

### THE VOICES OF THE EARTH

We opened wide      Our arms and bodies  
To receive thee, Eros !  
The iron veins  
Clashed in the mountains  
Echoed to Hades' depths : now thy Resplendence  
Shines all about us.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

*Eros (descends to earth)*

Blessed be the Light                      Over the Earth,  
And what the darkness hides,  
And what the sea cradles.  
Blessed be all !  
Peace be upon you !  
Sweet Peace and Quiet  
After the struggle,  
After the torment—  
Cool and refresh her  
Fluttering breast.—  
And did the crash and tremor strangle all  
The sweet breath in thy tender throat, Beloved ?  
Thou liest stricken by the shout and song  
Of all the Elementals greeting me—  
Yet with a grace so lovely that methinks  
Aglaia and Euphrosyne had laid thee  
A flower among flowers !

PSYCHE

Let thy mouth  
Lie long on mine and lull my throbbing pulse  
To rest and infinite swoon of ecstasy.  
Terror leaps prisoned in my heart, for lo !  
The Heavens were cloven with the crash and cry  
Of thousand brazen clarions, that rolled on  
Majestically deeper, richer till  
A hymn of praise more glorious than the sea.  
Sounded about thee ; and the gods beheld—

## EROS AND PSYCHE

And all the Muses—with benignant eyes  
The mystery of thy descent to earth.  
Before thee came the storm-wind fanged with spears  
Of crystal fineness that pierced all my veins  
And flung me earthwards. But thine arms are warm,  
Thy kisses are more dear than aught on earth.  
My happiness is come again, again !  
With thee beside me, what shall grieve or harm ?

### EROS

Ever I dreamed of those red lips of thine  
Whose vivid lustre rivals with thine eyes,  
Beloved, ever, since I heard thy name !  
Thy name is like the rose's fragrance rich,  
And as the spring among the crocuses  
Upon the meads—the bright and tender grace  
Of all thy steps and movements that the flowers  
Bend to caress and wreath themselves around !  
Thou art a flute-song in the memory  
With passionate harp-strings echoing between—

### PSYCHE

Ay, flute and harp ! And thou didst dance to them.  
First 'twas the sword-dance ; midst the ranks of steel  
As strong and supple as the blades, thy limbs  
Flashed rhythmically : then with a wild song  
As bold and gay as boyhood's heart eternal,  
Thou sprangest lightly hither like a spear  
Tost in the battle ; then with folded arms  
And heaving breast as in a waking dream



## EROS AND PSYCHE

Thou didst stand motionless with brooding eyes :—  
And fear, cold fear, stole trickling round my heart !  
But now I know thee God of Love and King  
Of sport and dance and all the sweetest joys—  
Thou shalt dissolve my fears. But soft ! thy child  
Entreats thy gentle touch, but while the temple  
Encloses still his godhead—not thy force.

EROS

Our child ! And thou didst bear him through all  
~~terrors~~  
Reneath thy heart ?

PSYCHE

Yea. He was all my care  
As the moons waxed and waned, and evermore  
A source of tears and prayers. Alone I had  
Serenely borne all anguish in the hope  
Of thee again. But him ! Our child ! the gods  
Were merciful, Pan helped us and Demeter ;  
But naught availed when Aphrodite hated.

EROS

My mother scourged thee ? But thy shoulders shine  
Stainlessly white and the slow perfumed drops  
Slide from thy heavy hair, as when thy slaves  
Each morning led thee to thy rose-strewn bath.  
Psyche, I kneel low at thy feet to-day,  
And marvelling gaze upon thee : One slim arm  
Curves from thy stately height to clasp the chain  
That decks thine ankle ; and thine eyes are wide

## EROS AND PSYCHE

With happiness profound, serene, and proud.  
Thou art the Queen of Love, and I, a god  
Before whose feet the mountains and the streams  
Are dust and dew—I kiss thy knees—

PSYCHE

Arise.

EROS

How thine arms burn and tremble !

PSYCHE

Verily,

For they are thine. But now I feel thy clasp  
Unweakened by so many hungry moons  
And lonely nights—a shiver courses through  
Each vein and nerve and bone, from head to foot.  
How strong thou art ! Thy nakedness is brown  
Sunkissed and sinewy as a stag at gaze !  
How beautiful thou art ! A god alone  
Can wear such beauty for a diadem.  
How thine eyes burn and glitter ! But thy clasp  
Is calm—

EROS

Such calmness would become a god,  
But, girl, a tempest thunders through my blood—  
That never lags or flows in tepid ease—  
And all my being trembles with the joy  
Of earth.

Thou dost, O Bright, O dazzling Bright,  
Thou dost, with tender vision, comprehend  
That the full rapture of my love's delight

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Is as a whirlwind to whose force I bend.  
Thou dost perceive, O Birch tree-like and Slim  
To whom I kneel—that all my passion flames  
Aloft to thee in one hymeneal hymn—  
And thy deep Peace enraptures while it tames.  
And thou wilt kiss me, Fairest of all Fair,  
And Aphrodite tune the broken lyre  
And light an aureole round thy dusky hair,  
In the twin glory of Ensouled Desire.

PSYCHE

Let mine hands lift thee then.

EROS

I seek

The fountain of thy voice—this flower  
Whose perfume is the heart of Spring !  
Come, let me breathe it.

*(He kisses her.)*

PSYCHE

Flattery !

I know not if 'tis tenderness  
Or jest : but ah ! entrancingly  
It quivers through me—yet 'tis strange  
Its honey hides a poignant stab,  
And turns me shy and full of fears—

EROS.

Forgive my wild and ardent will !  
But pride's cool, measuring gaze, and scorn  
Of froward lips, is turned by thee  
To lyric songs, and hymns of praise.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

Thou hast impregnated mine eyes  
With thine own beauty ! As I drove  
A meteor through the lambent air,  
To thee—the clouds became a swarm  
Of golden birds gigantic ! See !  
Behold them float through silver lakes,  
Their beaks are opal and their claws  
Onyx and chrysoprase. They bear  
Our happiness across the world  
And teach our love's alluring call  
To Echo, who shall blazon it  
To all the earth—Does my love weep ?

### PSYCHE

I know not whether joy's extreme  
Or ancient sorrow's throbbing wound  
Lies at the source of these my tears.  
For joy and grief and earth and heaven  
And all that ever loved and lived  
Is merged and melted into one.  
One, one with me, and I with Life—  
And thine eyes, only, shine above  
Even as Jove's spear on chaos.

*(He kisses her.)*

Ah !

The perfect sweetness of thy kiss—  
A golden pearl ambrosial from the courts  
Of Heaven, sank down and melted on my lips  
As, on the sea, the first rays of the sun.

## EROS AND PSYCHE

### EROS

But if the sun could not behold again,  
Deep mirrored in the sea, his face divine—  
How dull and small, Beloved, he would seem,  
How he would shrink and sink in sable murk—  
Therefore again Oh sea ! Greetings and thanks !  
*(He kisses her.)*

### PSYCHE

Now my lips burn anew, and every flame  
Awakes new ardour kindling all my frame—  
Even as the venturous tasters of the grape  
Are whelmed in purple floods, and none escape—

### EROS

Lovelier than Ganymede, our Love holds up  
To each of us a warm and brimming cup.  
Let us drink deep the scarlet, scented wine,  
Let us drink every thrill of bliss divine  
Until the world and we together, swoon.

### PSYCHE

Oh, curb the scorching torrent of thy speech !  
It seethes and darkens like a witch's cauldron  
And ancient night sinks like a pall about thee  
Shot through with sparks and writhing swords of  
flame !  
Bend down, and let the maiden air of morn  
In its triumphal coolness soothe thy lips,  
And let the dew that opens crystal eyes

## EROS AND PSYCHE

To greet the day, mirror thine eyes assuaged—  
Come, sit beside me, here !

EROS

Forgive me, dear !  
The magic that enthralled me, cut adrift,  
Intoxicant, my senses from my will  
And hurled them loose. But, by thine eyes redeemed,  
They are restored to my soul's power, for ever.  
And now, as Helios draws the mists apart,  
With the creative glory of his rays,  
Thy smile's warm sweetness blossoming in my heart  
Purifies, crowns, inspires, all my days.

## PRAYER AFTER THE SONG

Now that the cycle of my song—  
That echo of my breath divine—  
Ends,—Praise and thanks to thee belong  
As in that first faint prayer of mine.

Thy gracious gifts, with lavish hand  
Thine affluence for me hath poured :—  
As summer on the longing land,—  
As jewels from the wizard's hoard.

Ever my comforter thou wert,  
Lord of the Dance's spell entwined,  
When Cypris' nets and scourges hurt,  
Singing thou didst assuage my mind !

When with the universe sublime  
Melting my soul united : still  
In stately forms of rhythm and rhyme  
Thou hast built up my striving will.

Then let my fervent thanks attend  
Each ringing footstep, and thy fire  
Burn in my soul, nor fade, nor end,  
But ever fashion beauty higher.

Though but one gem in all thy crown—  
Smile and approve this song of mine !  
Golden of Hair and Voice, bend down,—  
I kneel, serve, worship thee, Divine.

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## NOTES

(1) *The Nature of the State* is the title of an investigation, planned on a comprehensive scale, for which he collected extensive material of all sorts for many years. Questions of hygiene, education and general culture are given an equal place with political, military, social and artistic problems, and everything is fused into that "mighty harmonious unity, the State, which is Form, Order, *Agora*," as he once wrote as a boy of twelve.

(2) The patience and perseverance shown in these studies are the more remarkable because to the last he was in doubt whether he was destined to be a statesman. It is as though he had unconsciously selected an organism for his central idea, the greatness and scope of which enabled his spirit to grow and develop.

(3) Lily Braun, *Memoirs of a Socialist*, Vol. II., pp. 187 *et seq.*

(4) Professor Dr. Josef Petzoldt had sent the following application, which speaks for itself, to the Prussian Ministry of Education (the most important parts are given here but the enclosures omitted):

"SPANDAU, December 8th, 1909.

"TO HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTRY FOR EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL AFFAIRS.

"I herewith beg to state the reasons for which I am sending this request to be released, as from next Easter, for three or four years, from my official duties in the Royal College at Spandau, and to be entrusted instead with the education of Otto Braun of Charlottenburg, now twelve years of age, son of Dr. Heinrich Braun and Frau Lily Braun, *née* von Kretschman. In June of this year, Frau Braun, on the suggestion of Geheimrat Professor Dr. Ostwald, came to me (as the author of the pamphlet, *Special Schools for Exceptionally Gifted Children*),

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to ask my advice as to the education of her brilliant son. Having read most carefully several of Otto's compositions, as well as talked to him for several hours, I convinced myself that his gifts were in no way over-estimated, but, on the contrary, are quite amazing. Any one who reads with critical care the things he has written (see Enclosure 3 attached herewith to the enclosed sketch of his life) and does not forget (as he might be forgiven for doing) that they are the work of a twelve-year-old boy, will reach a like conclusion. In an educational experience of over twenty years, during which I have come in contact with not a few highly gifted pupils, both boys and girls, I have never yet met with a case which could in any way even be compared to this one. His powers of assimilation alone are quite remarkable. At the age of nine he takes up a systematic study of German literature, and now, at the age of twelve, he has a knowledge of it, based on a reading of original sources, which would do honour to a candidate for a doctorate. He learnt Middle High German that he might read the sagas in the original, and Greek for the sake of the pre-Socratics. Studies in the history of art and in world history are added. He takes a lively interest in museums and exhibitions; music opens a new world to him; he has an observant eye for all the beauties of Nature, and he has begun to take up natural science seriously. But he is not merely a mirror that absorbs all this knowledge, only to reflect it back unaltered: these studies are not merely the means of satisfying a thirsting memory; no, they are assimilated, digested, transformed and reduced to system on individual lines. Everywhere we are met with a healthy and energetic effort to attain an ordered world of ideas. One has but to note (Enclosure 3, p. 40) how courageously he resists the onslaught of such a mass of interesting knowledge, how he forces it into a systematic classification, how he divides the world of intellect into four regions and these again into the two great divisions of 'study' and 'creative work,' and how he endeavours to account to himself for his own attitude to them. Is this not very striking, and in spite of its distorted perspective and youthful immaturity, sound to the core? Is not the joy with which he succeeds in asserting his personality, the wonder with which the survey of the centuries fills him, an unmistakable indication of a mind quite exceptionally powerful and active?

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Here a David with his sling of vivid and dominating ideas falls to earth a Goliath of the dust-heaps of dead knowledge! I do not doubt that in these first attempts (cf. that most noteworthy essay *Beyond the Tumult of the World*, Enclosure 3, pp. 32-36), an amazing philosophic gift is shown. *Ex ungue leonem*: this mind is quite sure never to remain immersed in scepticism and doubt; it has too much strength and profundity for that. He is not repeating mere empty phrases in the quotations from Pope and Anatole France, nor in his own remarks about them, and in what he says about the necessity of conflict (Enclosure 3, p. 38); they are the expression of his innermost feelings.

"His energetic reaction to the multitude of things that come streaming in upon him is not a means of defence but an attack. His is through and through—and that is the most important thing—a constructive nature. It is not too much to say that nearly all the different subjects he works at are intended primarily to assist his own productive powers and only gain value for him in so far as they stimulate his own thoughts and help him to constructive work. He starts at the age of five writing plays. It was this poetic activity that sent him to the tremendous task of studying German literature systematically (*Career*, p. 22), and for its sake also he extended his studies to include world-history and the history of civilization (*Career*, p. 24). It is a significant fact, and confirms anew what was said above as to the power of his intellect, that it is the drama he turns to—the drama, that form of art which is the highest expression of disciplined poetic power. And how right is his conception of its essence (Enclosure 3, p. 39) and in what dramatic form he embodies this conception!

"Even if his imagination is still very romantic (which is but to be expected in his stage of development), and even if gods and elves, ghosts and dragons, lightning and thunder, storms and hail, abysses and gorges play a large part in his concepts—fortunately, for he is still a true child—yet he knows how to clothe the most modern of problems with dramatic power in such images. Thus, in the essay, *Beyond the Tumult of the World*, he clothes in imaginative mythological garb the profound idea that our present enthusiasm for all the achievements of technical science carries with it the danger of our neglecting and under-estimating the importance of higher

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spiritual values, that this is contrary to nature and that it is a law of nature that the mastery should in the end remain to the mind, the world of thought.

"Occasionally his symbolism rises to gigantic heights, putting one in mind of Michelangelo or Dante: 'Behind Anangke, bound in chains, there knelt humbly a tremendous Being: every limb struggled with every other; very rarely did they make peace. When they did the man became almost as powerful as Anangke, and the great goddess, when she beheld it, trembled. This Being was Mankind' (Enclosure 3, p. 33). Even if the idea of the invincible and unrivalled power of socially united humanity emanated from the atmosphere of his home; if the ten-year-old child could make it so entirely his own as to be able to clothe it in this powerful and striking image, then we may rest assured that we are making no mistake: this child is a born poet and thinker, and we are justified in the great hopes we entertain for his future.

"There can be little doubt that none of our higher schools would provide the sort of education required for the gifts of such a child. That has been shown by his school career up to now (*Career*, p. 18), and would find still stronger confirmation in the future. If our schools are already inadequate to meet the needs of the ten per cent. of exceptionally gifted children whom we have, on an average, in every class, they would in the present case probably be entirely useless. For this boy it would be most oppressive to have to spend a long time over knowledge which he has either already acquired or which he can pick up in a moment, and he would probably be just as little able to bear the restraint as Schiller was able to bear that of the *Karlschule*. One day he would burst out: "I am not going to school any more." To try and force him would be impossible, or else it would bring about a catastrophe.

"Taking into account all these considerations, I beg to be allowed to undertake the education of Otto Braun, which would necessitate my being relieved of nine hours' teaching here at the Royal College for the next three or four years—or for one year to begin with, and then, as results warrant, for each further year, up to a total of three or four years. If my scientific work permitted it, I would gladly use my leisure for this education. But it is impossible for me to interrupt this work. . . .

(Signed) "PROF. DR. J. PETZOLDT."

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After an interval of over three months the Local Education Authority sent the following reply by order of the Minister of Education :

" KÖNIGLICHES PROVINZIAL-SCHULKOLLEGIUM,  
BERLIN, W. 9.

" 17th March, 1910.

" J. Nr. 2226.

" We are instructed by the Minister of Education to inform you in his name that he most certainly refuses to entertain your strange request of 8th December of last year.

" Enclosures returned herewith.

(Signed) " MAGER."

" To Professor Dr. Petzoldt,  
" Spandau."

(5) The following description is taken from a memoir written by his former mathematical master, Dr. Kaempf, in the morning edition of the *Post* of 3rd May, 1918 :

" Even in his earliest youth Otto Braun attracted the attention of large numbers of people on account of his rare gifts and the amazing range of his interests. The freshness, naturalness and youthful joyousness of his temperament justified the expectation that he would develop into a harmonious personality of a very high order.

" The boy Goethe must have been like this."

(6) He keeps a regular diary even before his seventh birthday. The first entries are of great fascination for those who still have a strong impression of the boy's character. But though unique, they are not definite enough in detail to enable those who did not know him to gain such a picture.

(7) At his request he had private lessons in Greek, so that he might read the Greek philosophers in the original.

(8) Although attempts were made to keep from the boy the straitened circumstances of his parents (which resulted from the breakdown of " The New Society " ; cf. Lily Braun, *Memoirs of a Socialist*, Vol. II., pp. 615 *et seq.*) yet at ten years of age he felt their worries, and imme-

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diately transformed his sorrow into an increased strength of will and greater zeal for work.

(9) This refers to the biography of his great-grand-mother which Lily Braun published under the title of *Im Schatten der Titanen* (*In the Shadow of the Titans*).

(10) His "novel" is the very original tale *Sigurd of the Woods*, which he had begun in Obergrainau. Only a few chapters could be found among his papers.

(11) In Wickersdorf disagreements among the head-masters (which eventually led to a definite secession) had made themselves disturbingly felt. Otto Braun, who was involved in these conflicts, suffered very acutely from them, especially as his inner needs found no satisfaction in this overwhelmingly rationalistic education. But the lack of time and leisure for his own serious work was quite unbearable. After an unsuccessful attempt to run away, his parents fetched him home at the end of September, 1908.

(12) In his essay, *Anti-Christendom*, he attempts to build up a new religion on the basis of courage, self-confidence and will. His aim is the harmonious unity of mind and body. That is why he rejects every form of asceticism, the one-sidedness of the expert, as well as the dilettante's enthusiastic interest in every subject. It is epitomised in twenty principles of faith which are really commandments. The tenth, for instance, runs: "Have great passions, but retain the power to master them!" The fifteenth runs: "Leave nothing undiscovered, search into everything and bring it to light, except art and beauty; these you shall enjoy." His great heaven-storming urge breaks out in the demand of the fourteenth: "Be a Titan."

The entry in the diary printed above proves that these ideas were already filling the mind of the boy of eleven, on his return from Wickersdorf. But it was his mother's birthday, 2nd July, 1909, which made him, in some haste, put them on paper. They are noteworthy, not only by

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reason of their exceptional form, but also on account of their clear arrangement, and the crescendo of emphasis.

(13) In Wickersdorf he had begun to read German literature systematically, and at ten years of age had mastered Middle High German, in order to know the *Nibelungen* in the original. After that, continuing his scheme of studies, he read Gudrun, Parival, Heliand, Beowulf, Einhard's Life of Charlemagne, the poems of Oswald von Wolkenstein, Walther von der Vogelweide, Hartmann von der Aue, Konrad von Würzburg, the plays of Hroswitha von Gandersheim and so forth. When he reached the morality plays (in November, 1909, aged twelve) he worked through—as will be seen in the diary entries—the three volumes of A. von Keller's Collected Edition, and at the same time read Creizenach's *History of the Newer Drama*, Froning's book on the *Drama of the Middle Ages*, and Zezschwitz, *The Medieval Drama*, etc.

(14) In the Collected Works of Peter Suchenwirt, edited by A. Primesser.

(15) He refers to the country house in the residential suburb Zehlendorf-Klein-Machnow which was built then and into which his family moved at the beginning of 1910. He was greatly attached to this home, to the great oaks centuries old, the slender birches, the luxuriant rose bushes and hedges of jasmine. In the garden, in the open heaths and the woods which spread all around, he found that intimate communion with Nature which his spirit so urgently demanded.

(16) Clemens Bäumker, *The Impossibilities of Siger of Brabant*.

(17) P. Mandonnet, *Siger de Brabant et l'Averroïsme latin au XIII<sup>ème</sup> siècle*.

(18) A. E. Schönbach, *Über die Marienklagen* (Of the *Plaints of the Virgin Mary*).

(19) Jacob Burckhardt, *Renaissance Civilisation*.

(20) Pet name for his father.

(21) After finishing the second volume of her *Memoirs*,



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Lily Brann was ordered a sea voyage for her health, which had suffered very acutely. She decided on a journey to Tenerife, and took her son with her.

(22) An essay arising out of his studies on the State, which he gave his parents for Christmas.

(23) Motto on the coat of arms of the Kretschmanns, his grandfather's family (General Hans von Kretschmann).

(24) Hippolyte Taine, *Napoleon*.

(25) *Annalen für Soziale Politik und Gesetzgebung*, edited by his father.

(26) See the head on the binding of the book.

(27) His dog.

(28) Printed on p. 274 of this book.

(29) See the poems, pp. 267 *et seq.*

(30) Heinrich Wölfflin, *Classic Art*. He quotes from the fourth edition.

(31) He was suffering at the time from some infection of the throat which took a long while to heal.

(32) *Eros and Psyche*, p. 293.

(33) He went to Bremen with his parents to attend a production of his mother's play *Mutter Maria*.

(34) See poem, p. 279.

(35) Extract from a long letter in the form of a poem written to his mother while she was staying at Florence.

(36) The entries in the diary are very scarce at the time of the declaration of war. The continuous excitement prevented him from writing anything down.

(37) As the authorities refused to accept him as a volunteer, he persuaded his mother to write to Mackensen, his grandfather's former Adjutant. Through him Otto joined the 4th Chasseurs, at Graudenz, where he received his military training.

(38) A friend describes the occurrence as follows: "It was a dark night in February, at Bollimow Borszynow. In No-Man's-Land, between our own and the Russian positions, left unburied from the last unsuccessful attack some months ago, lay forty dead grenadiers and chasseurs. Otto was ordered to take eight to twelve men and collect

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the dead between the two positions, and bring them in, or, if that were impossible, to bury them on the spot, guarding the parapet with arms, and for safety's sake, to creep along by the Russian barbed-wire entanglements. On all sides there were enemy patrols. We were so disgusted at this task we had to perform with the bodies of our dead comrades, who were in a terrible state of putrefaction (we had to take the identity discs off each man's breast) that we were quite beside ourselves. All of us who had to carry out this ghastly duty, or who had to keep guard against the enemy—and we were continually stumbling on dead Russians—spent our time cursing and grumbling. Otto became quite annoyed with the 'mugs' who could not even render this last service to their comrades, and when they objected, he said: 'If your minds cannot master decay, then decay will master your minds.' This made a deep impression on us. Then he recited verses of the *Iliad* in the dark night. It sounded so wonderful that every one was silent and listened enthralled. A lieutenant, otherwise a biased person, passed, and said solemnly: 'Few of the dead receive such a funeral dirge.' From the *Iliad* Otto passed to Hölderlin's Hymns, which he repeated from memory, with deep emotion. We all went on with our work without a murmur, and as if under a spell. It was so prophetically inspiring, the atmosphere about the dead became heroic through Otto's words."

Otto himself never mentioned a word of this night either in letters or in conversation. We only learnt of it from the letter written to us by his friend, Kurt Paasler-Luschkowko, after Otto's death, from which the above description is taken.

(39) Viktor Adler, the Austrian Social-Democrat leader, who was married to the sister of Otto's father.

(40) When Otto left to join his regiment every one who knew him thought he would be sent back because of his delicate constitution. But he made up for what he lacked in bodily strength by iron energy of will.

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(41) He had to stop at the hospital at Lowicz for some time on account of an inflammation of the eyes.

(42) While Lily Braun was in Loschwitz for a cure, he addressed his letters alternately to his mother and father.

(43) His superior officers, the major and the cavalry captain, hated him on account of the political opinions of his parents. The fact that he had come to the regiment at Mackensen's order and that he was, as they surmised, his *protégé*, only increased their hostility.

(44) This remark refers to a verse of Hölderlin's written in his album.

(45) He writes in detail in the next letter to his father about his decision to join the infantry.

(46) When Mackensen heard from Lily Braun of the behaviour of Otto's superior officers he at once ordered his transfer.

(47) He had telephoned home from Lodz.

(48) See the poem on p. 286.

(49) On his mother's fiftieth birthday.

(50) Alfred Weber, *The German Mission*.

(51) Cf. the passage in his diary. Lieutenant Brennfleck had taken Otto's place when he left.

(52) Heinrich Friedjung, *The Struggle for Predominance in Germany*.

(53) Friedrich Meinecke, *Internationalism and the National State*.

(54) His cousin. Cf. note 39.

(55) As Otto was very reserved as to his military achievements in his letters, diaries and conversations, readers may like to have this description by his company commander and friend, Hellmuth Neuser, which gives us a picture of him as a soldier :

" Very soon after Otto's arrival in our battalion (after leaving the 4th Chasseurs) he was able to overcome the distrust which the infantryman always had for the cavalryman. As commander of the despatch riders, who were soon his willing slaves, he proved himself as capable as he was fearless on patrol work and always

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brought back valuable information from enemy areas. Every one who was astonished by Otto's extraordinary gifts—which showed in conversation as well as by his sound judgment, particularly in military matters—and attracted by his natural charm—endeavoured to get into closer personal touch with him. Soon the instruction of his company commander in infantry matters became superfluous, for even on the theoretical side of infantry regulations, the pupil soon proved himself, if not the superior, at least the equal of his masters. Otto had an amazing gift and *flair* for tactical work in the battle area and a fine power of orientation. He was cut out as few others are for reconnoitring and taking over a position. He had a sure eye for the strong and the weak points of a position and would always, if necessary, confirm his judgment, which would then be absolutely reliable, by expert reconnoitring. Men—both superiors and subordinates—he managed with extraordinary ability. In his platoon he had unquestioned authority, for his men, with unfailing instinct, soon recognised the born leader in him; and above all, they had in him an example of unusual courage. A few exceptionally reliable chasseurs he had selected to be his constant companions on patrol excursions. They followed him through thick and thin.

"In the difficult defence of Goroditache-Baranowitschi Otto seized every opportunity—in this place fraught with exceptional danger—of reconnoitring in the front line. And very soon he had a unique knowledge of the whole shell-ridden area. Even in what seemed the most hopeless situation he never lost his courage, and he knew how to communicate his mood to others; quite unconsciously he had the greatest influence on all around him by reason of his unexampled personal courage, calm and equanimity, as well as on account of his extreme modesty. Content with any kind of food, and able to manage with a minimum of sleep, he put up with the meanest shelter and the most disagreeable weather conditions, and he never lost his sense of humour. He took especial care always to be in the midst of his men, and to live under the same conditions as they. Near Poniewica, to the great regret of all his comrades, he was wounded by a machine-gun firing continuously, the position of which he was seeking to ascertain. During his long absence from the battalion, which his wound necessitated, he always

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remained in contact with us. And when, in the spring of 1918, soon after his return to his platoon, he was, in spite of his own objections, appointed to the Regimental Staff (on account of some excellent reconnoitring work, and a report thereon) we were pleased and content, though we greatly regretted losing him, because he now had greater scope for his gifts. If the thought of death on the battlefield ever occurred to him, it must have been without fear or terror. I am convinced of this from conversations I had with him. This fact belongs to the complete picture of the soldier Otto Braun and may prove some consolation to the many who sorrow for this unique human being."

(56) For his father's birthday.

(57) In spite of his very much weakened health and his wounded arm, which required daily medical treatment, he took part in a machine-gun course in Döberitz. On the way and in the quiet evening hours he read and worked at history, politics and literature.

(58) He went on an official mission to Copenhagen for a few days.

(59) Krumbacher, *Greek Literature in the Middle Ages* (in *Kultur der Gegenwart*).

(60) He stayed here a few weeks to convalesce after a severe illness.

(61) Heinrich Gomperz, *The Greek Philosophers' Conception of Life and the Ideal of Inner Freedom*.

(62) On the morning of 29th April a direct shell hit ended his life. "We laid him on a bed of blossoming flowers till the carriage came for the funeral. His face was peaceful and unharmed." Thus wrote a friend and comrade to his father.

The announcement of his death issued by the battalion speaks of the "exemplary influence" of the boy of twenty.

(63) "Long these lips were silent, thou knowest it:  
Apollo

Suddenly sent me these songs! Read, and  
rejoice in my joy."

## APPENDIX

With this motto he gave, *Three Poems to Hippolyta and an Elegy* to his father on the latter's return from a journey in February, 1913.

(64) *Eros and Psyche* exists in two copies, the one "Dedicated to his parents, 24th December, 1913," is printed here, the other he gave his schoolmaster, Dr. Hermann Schmalenbach, as a wedding present. Both are illustrated by young Sabine Lepsius.

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